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Screening Interiority:

**Dream, the Unconscious, Emotion and Imagination
in Cinematic Language**

by

Meg Frances Rickards

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Abstract

The portrayal of film characters' inner experience ensures a level of audience engagement often precluded in primarily plot-driven narratives. Yet, there is a prevailing notion that interiority is the exclusive domain of literature. To counter this pedagogy, the thesis explores how filmmakers can externalise dream; the unconscious; emotional journeys, and the realm of the imagination through cinematic language.

The study draws on a theoretical framework that incorporates psychoanalytic film theory, neo-formalism and literary theory, and which engages to some extent with authorship. The compatablist methodological approach draws on these modes of analysis, while systematically bridging theory and practice. The thesis dovetails with a creative component – the screenplay of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, a children's feature film. Through this case study, the thesis examines the largely undocumented relationship between film theory and analysis on the one hand, and screenwriting and film production on the other.

The research explores a number of areas germane to the screenplay, starting by uncovering innovative ways in which dreams can illuminate character interiority. It finds that animation, in its ability to render visible the metaphysical, is a compelling means of screening inner processes. Jan Švankmajer blends live action filmmaking with animation to bespeak the interpenetration of the conscious and unconscious realms. Hayao Miyazaki uses *anime* to construct otherworldly realms that reflect adolescent girls' rites of passage. In films that draw on African storytelling, animation is shown to make manifest the imaginative realm. Finally, the adaptation of the screenplay *Zinzi and the Boondogle* into a novel tests ways in which cinema and literature can divergently – but equally – evoke characters' interior lives.

The thesis counters the pedagogy which insists that film is suited only to external action. Rather, the research reveals potent cinematic means of evoking oneiric and fantasy lives – bridging the traditional chasm between film theory and praxis and inviting further meetings between these discourses.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Thesis Outline

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The precept

The most gripping moments of films for me are those that locate me within a character's head, in a way that I feel part of the screen persona's inner and emotional journey. In watching screen characters' journeys, from the dour Isak Borg in Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, 1957, to the petulant Chihiro in Hayao Miyazaki's animated feature *Spirited Away*, 2001, there have been times when I have been utterly transported, as if I myself were experiencing their states of mind. So for as long as I can remember, this has been my burning question: how does a filmmaker transpose character interiority into a cinematic experience?

Through my work as a screenwriter and a filmmaker, I have become aware that while characters' dialogue and dramatic action can be written into a screenplay, their interior lives need to be further communicated by the filmmakers on the screen, via film components such as performance, cinematography, sound design and editing. It is possible for a screenwriter to hint at a character's inner life on the page, but this life is only fully realised in translating the page to the screen. Should this translation process fall short, the end result is in danger of being blandly plot-driven – resulting in minimal audience identification.

I am interested in the practical nature of this transferral process. Therefore, each chapter of the thesis includes an addendum entitled "Implications for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*", in which I consider the impact of my academic research on the making of the film. It is my intention that the two parts of the project should be integrated and coherent. I include here a short synopsis of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* to contextualise my focus on the portrayal of dream,

fantasy and imaginative realms as specific aspects of interiority. The full screenplay is included as an appendix.

1.1.2 *Zinzi and the Boondogle* – a synopsis

Zinzi is just twelve when her mother dies, leaving her to raise her two younger brothers and her three-year-old sister, Leila. She is terrified of the responsibility but promises her mother that she will keep the family together. Her mother tells Zinzi that her heart will guide her in her task. But Zinzi is so caught up in her anxiety that she is emotionally paralysed.

Zinzi's first worry is how to pay the rent for their tiny home and she undertakes to bead tourist badges for the landlady's curio shop. She beads late into the night and, in her exhaustion, she muddles the designs for the baboon, dolphin and eagle icons that appear on the badges.

Her desperate tears fall onto the badge and a live mutant "Boondogle" is created. Speaking in riddle and rhyme he offers to conjure up the remaining badges. Frantic to meet her deadline, Zinzi agrees – and so is trapped into a complex relationship with the Boondogle. Over the next weeks, Zinzi relies more and more on the Boondogle's magic to secure her family, while the Boondogle's power feeds on her fear – without which he cannot remain in the Real World.

During each visit the Boondogle grows in strength and his threat to Zinzi looms larger. On the third visit, in a final bid to secure his life on earth, the Boondogle kidnaps Leila, hoping this will consign Zinzi to a state of indefinite fear.

But Zinzi and her brothers are determined to rescue Leila, and embark on an extraordinary journey across Cape Town – over the sea to Robben Island, and up to the highest crags of Table Mountain. They meet with baboons, dolphins and eagles, who challenge them to overcome their debilitating fear and who provide them with gifts that prove vital to their mission.

Late in the day, in a chilling turn of events, the children find a bead effigy of Leila amongst the dolls for sale in the curio shop. The only way to save her is to enter the Boondogle's Bead World – a dangerous, seductive realm – and to return before sunset. Zinzi's brothers soon succumb to temptation and fall under the spell of the Bead World, and when Zinzi finds her little sister, it turns out that Leila too has been entranced.

It is only by appealing to her mother's memory, that Zinzi is able to wake her siblings from their daze. But the Boondogle makes his appearance just as the sun is setting, and triumphantly declares that they will remain there forever, trapped in their bead bodies. In the nick of time, Zinzi remembers the animals' gifts, which combine to spirit the children back to the Real World.

However, back in the Real World, the Boondogle continues to plague the children. He begins to undo the magic that created the badges – so threatening to leave the children destitute once again. Zinzi finally realises that she holds the key to the Boondogle's power, and using the inner strength gained throughout her journey, confronts her fear.

In the final climactic scene, pitting her resolve and love for her family against the Boondogle's might, Zinzi destroys the Boondogle. The family is together again; and no longer overwhelmingly afraid, Zinzi's love for life is rekindled.

1.1.3 A poor cousin to written fiction?

Through the dual-structure of the thesis I examine – on both theoretical and practical levels – the problem of how to dramatise the inner lives of characters. A novelist may do so by means of stream-of-consciousness, inner soliloquy or through the description of thought. Cinema too has long-standing methods whereby it attempts to grant access to the protagonist's state of mind through the actor's behaviour and speech, subjective sound, and through subjective imagery such as flashbacks and dreams. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson discuss standard means through which a film may plunge the viewer into the character's mind: "We might hear an internal

feelings, and imagination) to their respective methods of handling conventions, time and space. (20)

Bluestone insists that the rendition of mental states – memory, dream, imagination – cannot be as adequately represented by film as by language: “If the film has difficulty presenting streams of consciousness, it has even more difficulty presenting states of mind which are defined precisely by the absence in them of the visible world” (47). I do not contest the difficulty of rendering mental states in cinematic terms: after all, it is this very challenge that my thesis investigates. But I do take issue with Bluestone’s insistence that written language is so much better suited than film for conveying thought (47). Instead, I would argue, film merely employs *differing* means for conveying mental states. Cinema’s realisation of interiority in spatial terms can be just as powerful as literature’s verbal means for doing so.

Bluestone may deem pictorial representations of dreams or memories as disappointing, yet he does not take into account that film is not exclusively “pictorial”, but has at its disposal a range of aural, rhythmic and narrative possibilities. What is more, the pictorial examples he cites are remarkably limited. He suggests that in order to show a memory or dream, one must “balloon a separate image into the frame”, or superimpose an image, or clear the frame entirely for its visual equivalent – using for instance the dissolve (47). Bluestone rightly insists that such techniques cannot render the conceptual feel of dreams and memories, and that “if we accept such devices at all, we accept them as cinematic conventions, not as conditions of conceptual consciousness” (48).

On the contrary, I will argue that cinema can rise above convention to stimulate the imagination, and that there are diverse and practical means of revealing the psyche through cinema. Christian Metz introduced his groundbreaking study, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, with the description of film as a “technique of the imaginary” (3).¹ Similarly, Vicky

¹ Metz sees cinema as a “technique of the imaginary” in two senses. Firstly, in the ordinary sense of the word, most films consist of fictional narratives and depend for their signification on the “imaginary media of photography and phonography”. Secondly, in the Lacanian sense, the imaginary designates “the basic cure of the ego” and the “durable mark of the

Lebeau argues that cinema has a special tie to the life of the mind:

“approximate, imitative, it is a type of mime of both mind and world” (3).

There is the persistent sense that cinema imitates the movement of the mind, and because of this link, it is perceived that there is a correspondence – albeit elusive – to be discovered between the psyche and cinema (Lebeau 3). In investigating this correspondence, I will describe different aspects of character interiority in terms of the psyche, thought, imagination and the subconscious.

My thesis suggests that, in order to achieve the imaginative involvement of the viewer, filmmakers should continually seek ways to represent inner states. This thesis does not, however, position itself as a “How To” manual in the vein of Syd Field’s *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*. Instead, I aim to investigate various filmmakers’ methods of conveying dream, fantasy and inner journeys on the screen, and to evaluate their efficacy, using *Zinzi* and *the Boondogle* by way of example. I aim to make a contribution to the existing literature about film and interiority by developing links between theory and praxis, and by exploring ways in which filmmakers and film theorists can approach the challenges presented in screening internal processes.

1.2 Thesis outline

Chapter 2 consists of the methodological overview and literature review. The methodological overview defines my techniques of analysis in practical terms. The literature review outlines the theoretical perspectives on which I draw, offering a selective overview of existing work on the screening of interior processes.

In Chapter 3, “Dreams that illuminate: character revelation through cinematic dream”, I build on the long-standing analogy between dream and film,

mirror”, which is reactivated by “that other mirror”, namely the cinema screen (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 3-4). Where I refer to the term “imaginary”, I do not imply its Lacanian sense, but rather refer to the repertoire of images that we draw on to mediate the distance between the ideal, unified subject and the real.

outlined in the literature review. The chapter investigates the representation of dream in four films: Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957), Satoshi Kon's *Perfect Blue* (1999)², Alejandro Amenábar's *Open Your Eyes* (1997), and Cameron Crowe's *Vanilla Sky* (2001). I specifically look at how the filmmakers handle dreams in ways rooted in a character's experience, in order to throw light on the dramatic question motivating the character, and to communicate an authorial message.

In Chapter 4, "Animating shifts in consciousness: animation and live action in the feature films of Jan Švankmajer", I propose that animation functions to express the metaphysical and to transform reality. By extension, where animation is combined with live action, the animation affects and changes the reality of the live action. The blending of live action filmmaking with animation in Švankmajer's work articulates the inter-penetration of the conscious and unconscious realms. Like the Surrealism admired by Švankmajer, animation upsets the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious, subverting the ordinary to express interiority.

Chapter 5, "Otherworldly journeys and emotional voyages: *anime* and narrative techniques in the work of Hayao Miyazaki", investigates Miyazaki's use of animation techniques and of narrative strategies to externalise the inner processes of his predominantly adolescent female protagonists. Focusing on three of Miyazaki's films that depict young girls who move into otherworldly realms, I argue that these imagined worlds serve as metaphors for their rites of passage and emotional journeys.

Chapter 6, "African oral storytelling, aesthetics and cultural expression in children's animated feature films", posits that animation can be used to represent the imaginative realms present in African folktales. The chapter examines the origins of stories in terms of themes, settings, and authorship, before undertaking a comparative study of three animated features. The presence of the oral tradition within these films is considered in relation to

² Instead of following the Japanese convention of naming, whereby the family name is first, I have followed the Western convention – simply to avoid confusion in that almost all the literature in English does so, and Japanese people usually invert the traditional Japanese order when speaking English. Therefore I shall refer to Satoshi Kon and Hayao Miyazaki, although in Japan they are known as Kon Satoshi and Miyazaki Hayao.

questions of structure and style, ranging from the musical score through to the use of accents, symbolic spaces and techniques for representing subjective experience.

Furthermore, in addenda to Chapters 3 to 6, I apply my findings to the screenplay *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, and consider the most effective narrative strategies and cinematic techniques of conveying the characters' interiority.

In Chapter 7, I review the process of converting the screenplay *Zinzi and the Boondogle* into a short novel. The adaptation process clarifies many of the key differences between screen- and novel writing. In writing the novel I realised just how many visual and aural elements in the streamlined format of the screenplay are left to the filmmakers' interpretation. The adaptation to a novel involved "writing the interior", with the effect – in turn – of highlighting the shortcomings on this level in the screenplay. These gaps necessitated a full-circle return to the screenplay to suggest means of screening dream, fantasy and thought.

Lastly, in Chapter 8 I review the thesis, suggest how it might contribute to existing dialogue, and make recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

Methodological Overview and Literature Review

2.1 Methodological Overview

2.1.1 Bridging theory and praxis

The thesis takes a two-tiered methodological approach – combining theoretical and creative elements. By completing a dissertation in conjunction with a screenplay, I aim to explore the links between film theory and analysis on the one hand, and practical screenwriting on the other. These two components have developed alongside one another: the needs of the screenplay have dictated the course and content of my research, and conversely, the screenplay has been extensively redrafted and revised as the research has proceeded. Notably, in the addendum to each chapter, I consider the revision of the screenplay in the light of the theoretical research.

In linking the theoretical framework to the practicalities of filmmaking, I have selected for analysis films on which I can draw in developing *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. I draw comparisons and contrasts with the work of established *auteurs* who share a thematic focus with my project, or whose films suggest appropriate techniques. Some of the films discussed are aimed at children and others at adult viewers; but they are all useful in terms of identifying technical and/or narrative methods for possible use in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. For instance, the requirement for animated elements in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is the reason for focusing on the animators Švankmajer and Miyazaki, and on African animation. At times the examples operate by way of counterpoint, illustrating what I intend to avoid – thereby throwing my own aims into sharper relief.

My attempt to integrate the research project with my practical questions has similarly guided my thematic focus, which concentrates on those interior processes that appear in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*: dream, unconscious, emotion and imagination. In the same vein, this shaping principle has excluded

discussion of the states of memory or hallucination, which do not play structural or narrative roles in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*.

2.1.2 Multiple methodologies

In *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Robert Stam makes the case for an open-minded approach to film theory:

[Film] theory is now a little less grand, a little more pragmatic, a little less ethnocentric, masculinist, and heterosexist, and a little less inclined to overarching systems, drawing on a plurality of theoretical paradigms. What is necessary, I think, is for the diverse theories to be more aware of one another, so that psycho-analytically oriented theorists read cognitive theory, and cognitive theorists read critical race theory, for example. The question is not one of relativism or mere pluralism, but rather of multiple grids and knowledges, each of which sheds a specific light on the object studied. (330)

In attempting to cast “specific light” on my object of enquiry, namely the screening of interiority, I have drawn on a range of methodologies. Given that I look at this overarching question from different angles in each chapter, my methodological approach necessarily draws on different theories – predominantly psychoanalytical film theory, neo-formalist methodology and auteur theory – in order to address the specific research questions posed in each instance.

2.1.3 Methods gained from psychoanalytical film theory

In his essay “Nightmare and the Horror Film”, Noël Carroll maintains that he does not see psychoanalysis as “a hermeneutic tool that can be applied unproblematically to any kind of film or work of art” (160). Consequently he advises that the adoption of psychoanalysis as an interpretive tool in a given

case should be accompanied by a justification for its use ("Nightmare" 160). This thesis encompasses methods based on psychoanalytical film theory, expressly in order to explore elements within film as manifestations of the character's unconscious. The research is concerned neither with filmic elements as an expression of the cultural unconscious, nor of the filmmaker's unconscious.

The driving question of the thesis as a whole, how a filmmaker can externalise interiority, is thematically resonant with aspects of psychoanalytic film theory – especially as defined by Christian Metz. I also draw on methods that might be defined as semiotic – a natural result of the intersection of these two fields in Metz's work.³ I refer, for instance, to Metz's semiotic use of the terms metaphor and metonymy, as they prove useful in analysing the screening of dreams. I will explore these concepts further in the literature review. Suffice to say for now that these terms – in their relationship to Freudian dreamwork notions of condensation and displacement – prove indispensable in my discussion of screening dreams in Chapter 3, and of Švankmajer's treatment of the unconscious in Chapter 4. Metz's framework is also useful in terms of specific filmic techniques such as the lap dissolve, which he discusses at length, and to which I will refer at points in this thesis.⁴

Another Metzian argument I invoke is that a mental state can be read through the use of a particular image operating on two levels at once. It is Metz's belief that the viewer goes through a two-stage process when watching a film: first reading the image for its denotative content, before considering what the image connotes (Eberwein 193). However, Ian Douglas in *Film and Meaning* says that he cannot believe that a single item of discourse has ever been uttered that was not both denotative and connotative:

³ Interestingly, Robert Eberwein asserts that although there was a marked shift of emphasis between Metz's major works of linguistic analysis, (i.e. *Film Language* and *Language and Cinema*, both published in 1974) and his first major work of psychoanalytic film theory, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 1975, the semiotic concern with signification nonetheless defines his position (199). However, Rascaroli claims that for Metz, the distinction between psychoanalysis and linguistics does not exist, but rather he places his work on the point of convergence of these two disciplines (n.p.).

⁴ For Metz's lengthy discussion of the lap dissolve, see his essay "Metaphor and Metonymy, or the Imaginary Referent", collected in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (276-80).

If Metz's definition were correct, we would be seeing a mere array of meaningless objects, since denotation depends on connotation for its sense, as connotation requires objects for its application. Connotation/denotation [...] prove to be in a dialectical relation, each requiring at least the concept of the other. That is, diegesis is the sum of signifieds! (107)

I would say that while diegesis is indubitably "the sum of signifieds", and whereas denotation and connotation are certainly inter-dependent, the terms provide useful methodological tools to define how a filmmaker may – using material imagery – simultaneously operate on literal and figurative levels in order to screen aspects of the internal.

Because of Metz's interest in layered and subjective meaning, there are times when selective use of semiotic and psychoanalytic terminology is useful for my discussion of interiority. However, I combine his methods of analysis with a very pragmatic engagement with neo-formalism. In fact, there is a degree of correspondence between the precise, synchronic approach that semiotic and neo-formalist methodologies entail. I suggest that for a practitioner, an engagement with Metz's writing proves a useful starting point for thinking about how films "work".

Metz's methodologies are by no means incompatible with those of the neo-formalists: rather his analytical techniques for analysis can serve to enrich and enliven neo-formalist analysis, and *visa versa*.

2.1.4 Neo-formalist analysis

Although my thesis draws on a range of theorists, the binding methodology is a narrative and stylistic dissection of the films under discussion. These close textual analyses take their cue firstly from the neo-formalist project pursued by Bordwell and Thompson, who maintain that any film creates a unique form from the "interplay of overall structure and film style":

[...] each individual element (each formal part or stylistic technique) functions according to its place within that system. Analysing the nature of that formal system, and the functions of individual devices is the goal of the critic. (*Film Art* 350)

In attempting to delineate the formal means by which filmmakers externalise mental processes, I draw on a very practical aspect of the neo-formalist approach – the “quoting” of films through the use of frame blow-ups. R. Barton Palmer argues that while the literary critic may incorporate portions of the text under analysis into a discussion, the film critic may only do so by “verbalising what is largely non-verbal” (1). Thompson asserts that paraphrasing cinematic meanings “reduces the complex interplay among the different sources of meaning within the film: the *mise-en-scène*, the sound tracks, the camera positioning and its framing action, the editing and the optical effects” (cited in Palmer 1). Thompson’s solution is to use extensive frame enlargements in order to “quote” from films. Although by way of illustration I adapt her technique of visual quotation, this is clearly not altogether satisfactory, given the lack of sound or movement in static frames. Therefore I include with my thesis a DVD with a selection of cross-referenced clips for each chapter.

While Thompson foregrounds film’s embodiment of narrative through cinema-specific devices, she recognises that the narrative itself may be understood with the help of literary concepts (cited in Palmer 2). Her acknowledgment, according to Palmer, recalls Metz’s conception that film as a *language* has developed in response to the need to tell a story (2). As a result, many cinematic properties that constitute the “classic grammar” of film are arguably analogous in their function – if not in their actual functioning – to the devices of literary narrative (Palmer 2). Thus there are times in discussing film narrative when I draw on methodology normally associated with literary criticism.

For one, in looking at Miyazaki’s screening of imagined worlds, I draw on Bruno Bettelheim’s work on fairytale to argue that Miyazaki’s articulation of his protagonists’ emotional journeys through fantasy helps child viewers to

come to terms with the challenges faced in their own journeys towards adulthood. I also utilise Tzvetan Todorov's theories of the fantastic, in order to explore Miyazaki's use of this genre within his films – in his slippage between real and imagined realms. In the chapter on African animation, I consider the work on storytelling by Anny Wynchank, Keyan Tomaselli and Manthia Diawara, to determine how African animated films reflect oral storytelling features such as repetition, voice-overs and music. Neo-formalism by no means precludes these kinds of narrative analyses of films.

Indeed, Bordwell and Thompson both bring neo-formalism to bear on narrative theory. According to Bordwell, the most common template structure can be articulated as a "canonical" story format, the structure of which he describes as follows: "introduction of setting and characters – explanation of a state of affairs – complicating action – ensuing events – outcome – ending" (*Narration and the Fiction Film* 35). Bordwell believes that in engaging with this format, spectators do not simply absorb a finalised and pre-existing narrative, but must actively construct its meaning (cited in Elsaesser and Buckland 170).

Taking their cue from Russian Formalism, Bordwell and Thompson suggest that in actively assembling meaning, spectators rearrange events to create a story. They adopt terms from Viktor Shklovsky, the leader of the Russian Formalist movement in the early 1920s, to label this story the *fabula*, and the actual order in which the fabula events are presented as the *syuzhet* (*Narration in the Fiction Film* 49, *Breaking the Glass Armor* 39). Bordwell sees the interaction of syuzhet and fabula as one of the most analytically important variables: "That is, to what extent does the unfolding syuzhet correspond to the logical, temporal and spatial nature of the fabula we construct?" (*Narration in the Fiction Film* 49). In looking at narrative structure, for instance in how dream representations disrupt linearity in *Vanilla Sky* and *Perfect Blue*, or how African journey narratives are re-told on the screen, I will employ this methodology – examining whether plot is constructed along linear or non-linear, fragmented or circular lines.

Style is the third element, after the *fabula* and *syuzhet*, that influences film comprehension, and which Bordwell defines as a film's "systematic use of cinematic devices" (*Narration in the Fiction Film*, 50). In order to uncover means for screening interiority, this thesis focuses to a great degree on the systematic use of cinematic methods, and in so doing, turns to the four steps for the analysis of film style spelled out by Bordwell and Thompson in *Film Art* (329-31).

The first step is to "determine the organisational structure of the film, its narrative or non-narrative formal system" (329). I will follow Bordwell and Thompson's method, for instance, in discussing the ways in which Švankmajer in his feature film *Alice* (1987) "manipulates causality, time and space" (*Film Art* 329). My aim is to determine how he structures his film to express a slippage between his protagonist's conscious and unconscious.

Bordwell and Thompson's second step is to "identify the salient techniques used" (*Film Art* 329). Thus in discussing *Alice* I will single out, among other features, the large number of point of view shots, the extreme close-up shots of various objects, and the use of low-fidelity sound.

The third step is to "trace out patterns of techniques within the whole film" (*Film Art* 330). I will do so in the case of *Alice* by looking at how changes in style reinforce the film's meaning. As we move, for instance, from Alice's conscious state of mind into the depths of her unconscious, there is a stylistic transition from a live action environment to one with animated elements.

The fourth step is to "propose functions for the salient techniques and the patterns that they form" (*Film Art* 331). I will suggest that the effect of stylistic elements such as the repetition of shots, and the juxtaposition of live and animated versions of Alice herself, is to make uncannily visible the internal state of the unconscious.

Not only will I pose these stylistic questions, but I will also draw on the neo-formalist approach to narrative as a system. For Bordwell and Thompson, films work via an interaction between formal and stylistic systems. Just as

they outline steps for stylistic analysis, Bordwell and Thompson suggest several questions that the viewer needs to ask in understanding a film's formal structures (*Film Art* 90). The question that has most relevance for my research, and which I pose repeatedly, is how the narration presents story information: "Does [the narration] give us considerable depth of story information by exploring characters' mental states?" (*Film Art* 90). Bordwell questions the level of knowledge available: a narration may present the whole of a character's mental life, either conscious or unconscious, or may "confine itself to the character's optical or auditory experience" (*Narration and the Fiction Film* 58). A film may eschew any but behavioural indications of psychological states, and it may even minimise those (*Narration in the Fiction Film* 58). Neo-formalist questions are useful in examining to what extent the films under analysis present a character's mental life, and the narrative strategies they employ to do so.

Neo-formalist analysis is closely aligned with cognitive film theory – a subject to which I will return in the literature review. Worth mentioning in terms of my methods, is an aspect of cognitive theorist Edward Branigan's thinking, namely that of focalisation in film. In *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, Branigan defines focalisation as follows:

Focalisation (reflection) involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focussing, focussed by), but rather actually experiencing something through seeing or hearing it. Focalisation also extends to more complex experiencing of objects: thinking, remembering, interpreting, wondering, fearing, believing, desiring, understanding, feeling guilt. (101)

External focalisation represents a degree of character awareness but from outside the character, for instance an eyeline match; whereas internal focalisation is "more private and subjective" (103). Branigan distinguishes further between "internally focalised shots (surface)", which represent a character's visual experience of diegetic events, as in point of view shots, and "internally focalised shots (depth)", which represent a character's internal

events, such as dreams and hallucinations (103). In terms of this thesis, I am most concerned with internally focalised shots defined by “depth” in that they represent a character’s inner experience. For instance, I will refer to internally focalised shots delineated by both surface and depth in discussing the slippage between reality and imagination in Satoshi Kon’s thriller *Perfect Blue*.

While neo-formalism, aligned with cognitivist theory, is useful for the kinds of textual analysis I employ, it is essential to recognise the method’s limitations. Neo-formalist distinctions between plot and story are surely somewhat artificial, and neo-formalist methods entirely ignore the unconscious aspects of interpretation. Although eminently practical for textual analysis, neo-formalist analysis can at its worst tend towards the reductionist.⁵ It seems essential then to employ neo-formalist methodology in conjunction with other forms of analysis.

2.1.5 A methodology that acknowledges authorship

An alternative form of analysis on which I draw is that of *auteur* criticism, which I use to examine the signature techniques favoured by particular directors. While I recognise that a film’s meaning lies in the interaction between filmmaker, text and audience – the predominant focus in this study is on the intentional construction of cinematic interiority. To this end, it is necessary to foreground the role of the filmmakers to a greater degree than cognitive theories of spectatorship, which are primarily concerned with the audience’s engagement and understanding.

The original concept of *auteur* theory is summed up by Andrew Sarris in “Notes on the *Auteur* Theory in 1962”. He lays out three premises for the theory. Firstly, the technical competence of a director, and secondly, the distinguishable personality of the director, are seen as criteria of value. The

⁵ Edward Said claimed in *Culture and Imperialism* that a formalist approach compares to “describing a road without its setting in the landscape” (105).

third and most important premise is seen as that concerned with “interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art” (586).⁶

A decade later, in 1972, Peter Wollen wrote “The *Auteur* Theory”, which engages with Sarris’ account, but furthermore brings semiotics and structuralism to bear on *auteur theory*. In language that seems also to draw heavily on psychoanalytical film theory, Wollen argues:

What the *auteur* theory argues is that any film, certainly a Hollywood film, is a network of different statements, crossing and contradicting each other, elaborated into a final ‘coherent’ version. Like a dream, the film the spectator sees it, so to speak, the ‘film façade’, the end product of ‘secondary revision’, which hides and masks the process which remains latent in the film ‘unconscious’. (602)

Wollen goes on to suggest that sometimes this “façade” is so “worked over” that it is impossible to see beyond characters, plot and dialogue; yet in other cases it is possible to decipher an underlying structure – which *auteur* analysis is able to discern in the film (602).

Neither Sarris nor Wollen address the major criticism of *auteur* theory, namely that the creation of any film – apart from the tiniest one-person effort – involves a team of filmmakers working co-operatively. The degree to which the director holds artistic control is eminently variable. Thus in my view, *auteur* analysis provides useful analytical tools, provided that the director is not viewed as sacrosanct or as working in isolation. This is certainly an oft-cited proviso. For one, in “Cinematic Authorship”, Paisley Livingstone points out that films may be collectively or individually authored, which is why she cannot “defend the idea that solitary artistic genius is the fundamental unit of all valuable cultural analysis” (133). She nonetheless insists that “an understanding of individual agency” is crucial to this analysis (133).

⁶ By “interior meaning”, Sarris is speaking of what is “extrapolated from the tension between a director’s personality and his material” (586). He is not speaking of character interiority, the focus of this thesis. In trying to refine precisely what he means by the term, Sarris ventures, “Dare I come out and say what I think it to be is an *élan* of the soul?” (587).

In fact, Berys Gaut, in "Film Authorship and Collaboration", suggests that there is considerable pressure on the critic to acknowledge multiple authorship:

Indeed, supporters of single authorship sometimes hedge their views with so many caveats about the collaborative nature of film production that they are embracing convictions that stand in tension with each other. (154)

No doubt I embrace these conflicting tensions, and I do cite the collaborative nature of filmmaking to qualify my views on authorship. Caveats notwithstanding, I focus on specific filmmakers for pragmatic reasons. My reason for devoting chapters to Švankmajer and Miyazaki is that their methods for externalising the internal are both idiosyncratic and innovative. It is useful in identifying methods for screening interiority that I treat Švankmajer and Miyazaki as "authors" of their films, responsible for a consistency in style and theme across their respective *oeuvres*.

Elsaesser and Buckland point out that a thematic analysis of a director's work always implies the presence of countervailing forces – most commonly those of producer and studio – against which an *auteur*-director is "deemed to have succeeded in imposing his signature" (127). However, examining oppositional forces is not my intention in this thesis. Švankmajer worked as an independent artist for many years, and when he came to make *Little Otik* for FilmFour, his distinctive *auteur* style was specifically what was sought after. Miyazaki is a founding owner of Studio Ghibli, which is devoted to making animation work in his chosen genres. Thus my interest in Švankmajer and Miyazaki as *auteurs* is not in their resistance to prevailing forces, but in their evolving strategies for screening the internal.

James Naremore points out that although the critical study of authors is no longer a central activity, anyone can see from the latest movies that individual style has not gone away, and that the star director is more visible than ever (19-20). In fact, he indicates that this is very much a commercial strategy for organising audience reception, and that the academic de-emphasis of authors

2.2.1 Psychoanalytic Film Theory: The Film/Dream Analogy

Although rejected by quarters such as the cognitivist movement, theories of film and dream illuminate aspects of cinema connected to interiority, with which this thesis is concerned. While recognising that the analogy between film and dream is attuned to a long tradition of thinking in cinema studies, I will focus largely on the contributions made by Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry, who played key roles in the development of a psychoanalytic theory of film through the 1970s and 1980s.⁷

In her essay “Like a Dream: A Critical History of the Oneiric Metaphor in Film Theory” published in the online journal *Kinema*, Laura Rascaroli posits that the coupling of cinema and psychoanalysis was endorsed in the seventies chiefly on the basis of the analogies that were said to exist between film and dream. Rascaroli points out, however, that the metaphor of film as dream begins as early as the birth of cinema, with the famous dispute on the contrast between cinema as a system of reproduction of reality on the one hand, and as magic and dream on the other (n.p.).

Vicky Lebeau cites the British historian and poet C.J. Pennethorne Hughes saying in 1930 that film is a form of dreaming in public: “the transmuted and regulated dream life of the people” (4). Lebeau believes that the appeal of seeing film as a public form of dreaming is the promise of a means to psychoanalyse culture: cinema has long been viewed as a road to the cultural unconscious, which gives psychoanalytic film theory its founding metaphor in the analogy between cinema and dreaming (6).

My thesis, however, does not explore film as the manifestation of the cultural unconscious, but instead explores filmic elements as they manifest a character’s unconscious. Nonetheless, the founding analogy between cinema and dreaming lays the ground for much psychoanalytical film theory that is useful for my purposes. In *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, Stam *et al* situate psychoanalytic film theory as grounded in an equivalence between the

⁷ Murray Smith points out that those who have argued that cinematic spectatorship is a dream-like experience include Jean Mitry, Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey, Noël Buch and Mary Ann Doane (113).

film viewer and the dreamer, taking the dreamwork – as pioneered by Freud – as analogous to the film itself (140). It is certainly impossible to consider any theory of dream and film without first considering Freud's work on unconscious fantasy. The very idea of a connection between film and dreams has its roots in his work, albeit that he did not make the connection himself.

2.2.1.1 Sigmund Freud

The idea of the dream as a world full of meaning runs through Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900, in which he famously claims, "when the work of interpretation has been completed the dream can be recognised as a wish-fulfilment" (33).⁸ According to Lebeau, film theory is grounded in this model of a psyche driven by the desire for wish fulfilment (35-6). And Rascaroli points out that Freud's representation of dreams as "visual representations" of unconscious thoughts, and of dreams as the dramatisation of the inner workings of the psyche, has clearly also had impact on the founding of psychoanalytic film studies (n.p.).⁹

Stam views Freud's unravelling of the various threads of dream-imagery as central to psychoanalytic film studies: "the transforming and deforming processes of the dream-work which permit the unconscious wish to surface as a representation" (*Film Theory* 140). The primary process, according to Freud, controls three activities: condensation, displacement, and considerations of representability.

Firstly, via the process of condensation, a whole range of associations can be represented by a single image (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 170). For instance, Freud cites the "construction of collective and composite persons" as one of

⁸ For Freud's extensive discussion on dreams as wish-fulfilment, see his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 34-44.

⁹ However, Freud's influence on psychoanalytic film studies has been indirect: he made no reference to cinema in his many writings on art, and he refused categorically to take part in the making of Pabst's *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1926), the first film on psychoanalysis (Rascaroli). On the other hand, as Baudry has noted, in *Die Traumdeutung* Freud described the psychic apparatus by comparing it to a microscope or a camera, thus indirectly recognising its analogy with optical devices (cited in Rascaroli n.p.).

the principle methods of dream condensation (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 181).¹⁰

Secondly, displacement involves the transfer of psychic energy from something significant to something banal, conferring great importance on a trivial item (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 190-1). Freud mentions a dream in which moving upstairs and downstairs displaces the dreamer's real anxiety about the danger of sexual relations with "persons of 'low' degree" (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 190-1).¹¹

The third condition of the dream work – that of representability – sees that it is possible for certain thoughts to be represented by visual images (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 194).¹² This condition of representability is clearly relevant in terms of my overall thesis, the guiding question of which is how an interior process can be depicted in cinematic terms.

The secondary process of the dreamwork is that of elaboration or revision, its aim being to fill in the gaps created by condensation and displacement, so that the content becomes more similar to conscious thought (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 336).¹³ During this revision a logical, narrative coherence is imposed on the stream of dream images (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 336). This process of secondary revision is, according to Rascaroli, frequently equated with that of film editing (n.p.). By way of example, the spontaneous transformation of time and space brought about by editing makes sense to the viewer in the same way that the dreamer accepts the possibility of walking through a doorway in the present and entering a house last lived in as a child.

Beyond the comparison that has often been made between dramatisation and shooting on the one hand, and secondary elaboration and editing on the other, Metz has extensively studied the action of the primary and secondary processes in his 1975 essay "The Imaginary Signifier". Furthermore, in his seminal essay of the same year, "The Apparatus: Metapsychological

¹⁰ For Freud's discussion of condensation, see *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 170-90.

¹¹ For further discussion on displacement, see *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 190-194.

¹² Freud elaborates on the means of representability in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 194-220.

¹³ Freud explores the conscious process of secondary revision in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 336-352.

Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema", Baudry draws substantially on Freud's description of dream as a projection (216), and also as a temporary form of regression (221).

2.2.1.2 Jean-Louis Baudry

In "The Apparatus" Baudry claims that "dream is a projection reminiscent of the cinematographic apparatus" (216).¹⁴ For Baudry, it is not the film's imitation of reality that creates the illusion, but the functioning of the apparatus itself (209). He likens film audiences to the prisoners in Plato's cave: they see only shadows, which are projected by people carrying statues – that is to say not reality, but a reproduction of reality (211). Baudry argues that analogously, by projecting shadows, cinema creates the same "more than real" effect that is experienced in dreams (216).

In arguing for the construction of a dream state in the film viewer, Baudry outlines certain conditions that make film viewing similar to dreaming: we are in a darkened room, our motor activity is reduced, and our visual perception is heightened to compensate for our lack of physical movement (219). However, in *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*, Noël Carroll disputes many of Baudry's analogies between dream and film, pointing out, for one, that the film viewer is experientially aware of being in a darkened room, whereas the dreamer is unaware of it (26).

Even where Carroll identifies aspects of film and dream that are patently not analogous, it seems counter-productive to dismiss the enduring film-dream analogy, given that it has been the locus of much fertile analysis. The analogy does highlight specific ways in which film operates like dream – for instance in its "capacity for figuration, translation of thoughts into images, reality extended to representations" (Baudry 216). Carroll argues that film and dream's shared visual quality is hardly significant in comparing what are external and internal phenomena respectively (*Mystifying Movies* 25). I

¹⁴ According to Baudry, Freud uses the term "projection" to suggest how we defensively externalise representations that we refuse to acknowledge as our own; yet the word "projection" also evokes a cinematographic use, given that it involves images that – once projected – come back to us as "a reality perceived from the outside" (216).

explores the relationship between dreams and films. Metz first identifies a number of differences between dreams and films, so much so that Carroll suggests that the article "might be read as a corrective to Baudry's 'The Apparatus'" (*Mystifying Movies* 44).

For Metz, the principal difference between dream and film is that dreamers do not know that they are dreaming, whereas film spectators are well aware that they are at the cinema (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 101). Nevertheless, Metz maintains that the gap between the states of dream and film sometimes tends to diminish, and that in such instances, the viewer's consciousness of the filmic situation "starts to become a bit murky and to waver". But he concedes that this slippage "is never carried to its conclusion in ordinary circumstances" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 101).

Metz holds that the second major difference between the film and dream derives strictly from the first: "filmic perception is a real perception [...]; it is not reducible to an internal perceptual process" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 109). Furthermore, the spectator receives images and sounds capable of reaching other spectators as well, "whereas the dream flux can reach the consciousness of no one but the dreamer" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 109). This is in fact not far removed from the point made by Carroll, that film experiences are open to interpersonal verification, and are therefore not purely subjective (*Mystifying Movies* 25). Arguably, this point about the interpersonally verifiable capacity is so obvious as to be virtually irrelevant – given that theorists discussing the relationship between film and dream are neither arguing that films *are* dreams nor that spectators are *dreaming*.

The third major difference between film and dream cited by Metz is that the diegetic film is in general considerably more "logical" and "constructed" than the dream ("Fiction Film" 120). He suggests that the most unrealistic films – films of the fantastic or the supernatural – are very often only films that obey a different genre logic, within which they are perfectly coherent ("Fiction Film" 120). I will allude to this disparity in logic in the following chapter, where I argue that in oneiric representations, the filmmaker battles to create the same degree of illogic as is present in real dreams. This difficulty is

further exacerbated where the filmmaker hopes to use a dream to build a character's dramatic motivation, or to convey a particular message to the audience.

Having elucidated the chief disparities between dream and film, Metz qualifies the analogy, re-orienting the comparison by linking film and daydream – in so doing taking his cue from Freud.¹⁹ He concludes that in the filmic state, as in the daydream, there exists a self-conscious awareness that precludes true illusion ("Fiction Film" 133). However, Carroll also contests the analogy between film and daydream, arguing that daydreaming is a talent that is acquired, and that not everyone does it (*Mystifying Movies* 48). He holds that children learn to daydream through play and through stories, and indicates that these are often picture stories, which in industrialised nations, would include movies and TV. In this way, daydreaming appears to be "the internalisation of externalised forms of representation" (*Mystifying Movies* 48). Carroll sees it as strange that theorists, extrapolating from Metz, explain our understanding of cinematic conventions by invoking the structures of daydreaming – given that the narrative devices of daydreaming frequently derive from cultural forms of narrative such as film:

Thus, when we encounter films we are not encountering something that is generally internal, but rather structures of representation found both internally and externally and whose provenance is most likely external. (*Mystifying Movies* 48)

However, the fact that daydreams may be inspired by film or by other external visual stimuli does not undercut Metz's analogy. For I do not suppose that Metz is implying a one-way relationship, whereby film follows the structure of a daydream. Rather he is suggesting that daydreams and films share a certain kinship. If anything, the fact that the relationship may be a two-way street endorses the connection between film and dream. I maintain, however, that there is a greater degree of validity to the

¹⁹ Freud saw the daydream or *tagraum* as a "conscious phantasy" (Metz, "Psychoanalysis and Cinema" 129).

film/daydream analogy, particularly in the way that “perceptual transference falls short of its conclusion” (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 129).

Despite all his arguments for the affinity between daydream and film, Metz foregrounds an essential difference in that films are externally imposed rather than imagined (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 135). Speaking of a “dreaming subject”, Metz claims that this subject is generally “less satisfied with films that he sees than with daydreams he manufactures” (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 135).²⁰ However, Metz maintains that the material existence of filmic images helps to compensate for their alien origin, and concludes that part of our desire for cinema resides in its capacity to externalise physically inner processes:

This is the specific joy of receiving from the external world images that are usually internal images, images that are familiar or not very far from familiar, of seeing them inscribed in a physical location (the screen), of discovering in this way something almost realisable in them.... (“Fiction Film” 136)

This ability of film to realise “images that are usually internal images” is of course central to my thesis, and it is indeed useful in analysing this process to examine some of the particular techniques that Metz ascribes to cinema.

In the final essay collected in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, “Metaphor/Metonymy or the Imaginary Referent”, 1975, Metz explores specific cinematic techniques, relating them to the processes of Freud’s dream work. He draws on Lacan, who recognises the unconscious in each activity of human thought.²¹ Metz claims that in the Lacanian orientation, psychoanalysis ties Freud’s ideas of condensation and displacement to metaphor and metonymy respectively (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 153). And, through post-Saussurian linguistics, Metz sees the notions

²⁰ Please note that I do not assume a male spectator and have avoided the use of the generic pronoun “he” – except in cases like this one, where I am quoting another.

²¹ In doing so, Metz asserts the invalidity of a radical separation between the primary process of the dream work – seen as an unconscious activity – and the secondary process as a conscious one (“Psychoanalysis and Cinema” 122). Instead, Metz insists, the two processes interact (“Psychoanalysis and Cinema” 123).

of condensation and displacement as tied to those of syntagm and paradigm (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 153). Given the psychoanalytic bent of this discussion, I will focus on the metaphor/metonymy pair – terms I will employ in my analysis. However, Rascaroli points out that these terms are limited in being imprecise: for Metz's analysis of cross-fading can be described as both primary and secondary, metonymy and metaphor, displacement and condensation (n.p.).

Rascaroli suggests that the metaphor of the dream could still be useful in film analysis, rather than in constructing a comprehensive theoretical apparatus (n.p.). She cites a number of authors who have approached films within a framework of cinema and psychoanalysis: a reading by James F. Maxfield of *Vertigo* as an Oedipal dream;²² a Freudian analysis of Resnais' *Providence*;²³ a study of the dream imagery in Tarkovsky;²⁴ and a study of the dream-like characteristics of musical videos²⁵ (n.p.). Rather than adhering to a "comprehensive theoretical apparatus", I draw on particular psychoanalytical constructs – such as condensation, displacement, metaphor and metonymy – to discuss the screening of dream tropes in Chapter 3.

In investigating the mixing of live action and animation in the work of Švankmajer in Chapter 4, I explore how psychoanalytic film theory focusing on the uncanny, the surreal and the dreamlike, applies to animation. Most existing work on these themes has neglected the field of animation, being more concerned with using psychoanalysis to analyse the horror and science fiction genres, and with the mechanics of film spectatorship. So the use of psychoanalytical film theory in relation to animation opens up some pertinent questions, one example being that of audience identification with animated as opposed to live-action characters. At the same time, I bring systematic stylistic analysis to bear on Švankmajer's animation: thus in my analysis of screened dreams, and other representations of interiority, the constructs

²² James F. Maxfield, "A Dreamer and His Dream: Another Way Of Looking At Hitchcock's *Vertigo*", *Film Criticism*, 3 (Spring 1990): 3-13.

²³ Diane L. Shoos, "Language and Repression in Alain Resnais' *Providence*", *Film Criticism*, 3 (Spring 1989): 3-12.

²⁴ Vlada Petric, "Tarkovski's Dream Imagery", *Film Quarterly* 3.2 (Winter 1989/90): 28-34.

²⁵ Gary Burns, "Dreams and Mediation in Music Video", *Wide Angle* 10.2 (1988): 41-61.

gleaned from psychoanalytical film theory are invariably combined with methods drawn from neo-formalist theory.

2.2.2 Neo-formalism and cognitive film theory

In the methodological overview, I outlined the practical ways in which I use neo-formalist analysis. In this literature review I consider the loose theoretical movement that has fostered this kind of approach – namely cognitive film theory as developed by David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Noël Carroll and others. On his website on cinema, Bordwell defines cognitivism as follows:

Cognitivism holds that people's perceptions, feelings, and actions result in significant part from processes which go beyond the input to the senses. These processes include prior mental representations which to an important degree are projected onto the world out there, as a way of ordering it.
(n.p.)

The relationship between neo-formalism and cognitivism is outlined on the *Film International* website by Christer Mattsson, who explains that Russian formalism entered into an alliance with cognitive theory to form the neo-formalistic approach in film theory (n.p.). In Eisenstein's *'Ivan the Terrible'*, Kristin Thompson too states that neo-formalism derives largely from Russian Formalism (8). According to Mattsson, the cognitive aspect of the approach was initially used mainly to "provide psychological anchorage and motivation" for neo-formalistic analysis, but that with time, cognitive considerations became increasingly important (n.p.). It is Mattsson's view that this was partly due to the growing status of cognitive science in general, but that it was also a response to those who criticised neo-formalism for being "too little interested in real spectators' ways of reading films" (n.p.).

Bordwell, although explicitly opposed to psychoanalytical film analysis, does acknowledge in *Narration in the Fiction Film* the usefulness of psychoanalysis

as regards the spectator: "While I do not deny the usefulness of psychoanalytic approaches to the spectator, I see no reason to claim for the unconscious any activities which can be explained on other grounds" (30). Following the cognitive scientists, Bordwell argues that film theorists should begin with cognitive explanations of filmic phenomena, and should move on to psychoanalytic explanations only if the cognitive account is found wanting (30). I would agree with Bordwell on this count.

Yet, psychoanalytic theorists would insist that cognitive theory denies the importance of repressed unconscious material, which often governs our responses to film (and life) without our awareness. Elsaesser and Buckland express this division between psychoanalytic film theory and cognitivism:

Psychoanalytic film theorists...define the experience of reality as not being delimited by the horizon of consciousness (or 'common sense'), but argue that it includes myth, ideology and unconscious desires and fantasies. According to psychoanalysts, our consciousness is merely the tip of our identity, most of which remains hidden and repressed. But for cognitive scientists, consciousness is not a mere superstructure, but the base, or basis, of identity. (169)

The main sticking point between psychoanalytical film theorists and cognitivists is then about the ways in which audiences respond to films – whether it be on both conscious and unconscious levels, or on an exclusively cognitive basis. Be this as it may, my employment of both theories is not so much to analyse audience reception of filmic material, but to analyse filmic elements relating to the characters' internal processes. In dissecting stylistic and narrative manifestations of interiority, cognitive theory and psychoanalytical film theory work well in conjunction with one another.

It remains to review the ways in which cognitive analysis has been used to date. Gregory Currie suggests that broadly cognitivist thinking can be found in work on film throughout the twentieth century, for instance in Munsterberg's 1916 essay "The Photoplay: A Psychological Study", but that

cognitivism as a distinctive and self-conscious research program took shape in the 1980s (105). In 1985 there was the publication of Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson's *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, along with Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film* in the same year. According to Mattsson, this laid the foundation of the new "formalistic approach" in film theory.

In the 1990s, the cognitive theory of film truly came into its own with a flurry of publications.²⁶ According to Elsaesser and Buckland, cognitivist authors typically acknowledge the originality of Bordwell's work, before going on to refine his ideas – either by exploring underdeveloped areas, or by re-establishing cognitive film theory on a deeper foundation (186). But one frequent criticism emerges from these authors, namely that "Bordwell is an 'atheistic' narratologist because he does not recognise the role of an external 'master of ceremonies' controlling the events in the fabula" (Elsaesser and Buckland 187). I diverge from classic neo-formalist analysis in actually foregrounding the fabula's external agents, namely the filmmakers. Given that my thesis asks how the creators of a film might consciously employ cinematic techniques in order to externalise internal processes, I depart from Bordwell's conception of the fabula as being constructed predominantly in the mind of the audience.

I also diverge from mainstream cognitive thinking in its near-absolute rejection of psychoanalytical film theory.²⁷ According to Stam, cognitivists have been critical of what they regard as "the hermetic, inflated, and tautological discourse of film theory and especially psychoanalytic film theory" (*Film Theory* 236). At the same time, Stam points to some of the limitations of cognitivism, arguing that what is missing in cognitive theory's

²⁶ These include Joseph Anderson's *The Reality of Illusion* (1996), Edward Branigan's *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (1992), Gregory Currie's *Image and Mind* (1995), Torben Grodal's *Moving Pictures* (1997), Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters* (1995), and *Emotion and the Structure of the Narrative Film* (1996) by Ed Tan (Elsaesser and Buckland 186). In addition, Currie cites Leibowitz's essay, "Apt Feelings, or Why 'Women's Films' aren't Trivial", 1996; and also a study focusing on corporate and global marketing events in Ruth Vasey's *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939*, 1997 (105). Also Stam points to the existence of cognitivist studies of the avant-garde, of the documentary and of horror (236).

²⁷ My thesis is unusual, but by no means unique, in drawing on both cognitivist and psychoanalytical thinking. For instance, Richard Allen combines cognitivist theory with aspects of psychoanalytical theory (Stam: 237). In his essay "Psychoanalytic Film Theory", Allen in fact argues that psychoanalysis should be one among many conceptual frameworks to be deployed by the critic seeking to understand a film or body of films (142).

notion of the spectator is “a sense of social and ideological contradiction” (*Film Theory* 242). He questions why cognitivism insists that our responses to films are largely rationally motivated, asking, “Couldn’t spectatorial response intertwine the rational and the irrational?” (242). I certainly do not see why not.

In reviewing the literature in both the psychoanalytic film theory and neo-formalist fields, I have tried to ascertain to what extent the literature has looked at the practical possibilities for screening internal processes, and have found that there is a dearth of writing that directly links theory and praxis. There is, however, one particular body of work in which there is some practical discussion of externalizing inner processes – namely that of screenwriters’ handbooks.

2.2.3 Screenwriting Handbooks

Referring in *Storytelling in Film and Television* to the books written either by scriptwriters or by teachers of television writing, Kristen Thompson acknowledges that although they do not present high-level theory, “on a practical level they can tell much about the aesthetic norms of commercial television” (36). Thompson sees the main drawback of these manuals as being that they are geared towards aspiring freelancers rather than established writers, and hence “stick to a fairly rudimentary level” (*Storytelling* 37). The same simplicity holds true for screenwriting manuals for feature films. Nonetheless I would endorse Thompson’s view that these deserve consideration in that their advice points to expected norms. While my thesis does not intend to serve as a “how to” manual, it does engage extensively with praxis; so it seems essential to cross-reference the strands of pedagogy that inform screenwriting handbooks.

Robert McKee’s *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*, considered by many to be the screenwriting bible, exhorts screenwriters to remember the following: “We must realize that a screenplay is not a novel. Novelists can directly invade the thoughts and feelings of

characters. We cannot" (343). McKee goes on to warn against forcing exposition into a film through "novel-like free associative editing or semisubliminal flutter cuts that 'glimpse' a character's thoughts" (343). I would concur that such methods are often contrived, and that cinema usually cannot access thoughts via the direct means as do novels. However, there are times when free associative editing is entirely appropriate, for example in Švankmajer's surrealist exploration of mortality in *Faust* (1994), where shots of rickety scaffolding and decaying buildings signify the protagonist's deep-seated fear of his own transience. Moreover, even in genres that preclude free associative editing, filmmakers can – through sound design, music and *mise-en-scène* – convey actors' states of mind, albeit not their precise thoughts in verbal terms.²⁸

Dream is one means of weaving a character's thoughts – both conscious and unconscious – into the plot. Aided by dream and flashback, Isak Borg throughout Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957) is clearly replaying his misspent life in his head – without his thought process ever seeming unnaturally manufactured. Yet, apart from routinely underestimating film's capacity for thought, screenplay manuals for the most part caution aspiring writers to avoid cinematic dreams.

Syd Field's *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, like McKee's *Story*, is one of the most widely consulted books among aspiring screenwriters. Field cites the writer of *Dances with Wolves*, Michael Blake, justifying his decision to omit dreams altogether – despite the fact that they were crucial to his novel:

There were two important dream sequences that shed a lot of light on Lieutenant Dunbar and what makes him tick. But I felt, and Kevin [Costner] felt, that those kinds of sequences never worked in movies. Dream sequences just tend to be flops. They were left out even though they were important. (256)

²⁸ An example is the nightclub scene in Cameron Crowe's *Vanilla Sky* (2001), where David Ames' fractured mindset is conveyed even with his facial expressions concealed by a mask. The high tempo music, strobe lighting, crash zooms and increasingly fast editing, work in conjunction with one another to convey the protagonist's manic headspace. Apart from voiceover, there also exist narrative tricks for articulating a character's innermost thoughts in precise verbal terms: for instance in Satoshi Kon's *Perfect Blue* (1999), where Mima's stalker mirrors her thinking via a website, on which Mima reads her own thoughts.

The implication seems overwhelmingly defeatist. Granted, many cinematic dreams are over-stated, for instance the highly orchestrated dream in *Spellbound*, 1945, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. It is perhaps in response to dreams such as this one that McKee describes the dream sequence as "exposition in a ball gown", and as usually a feeble effort to "disguise information in Freudian clichés" (343).²⁹

But there are, of course, examples of highly effectual cinematic dreams. Indeed, McKee does cite the opening scene of *Wild Strawberries*, which is discussed in detail in the following chapter, as one of the few effective uses of a dream (343).

To be fair, there are manuals that do not caution so much against dream *per se*, as they do against their clichéd treatment. Richard Krevolin in *How to Adapt Anything into a Screenplay* discusses the flashbacks in the form of a dream employed in *X-Men*:

Do yourself a favor. When you use a dream sequence, please don't have your character 'jolt from sleep' or 'sit bolt upright'. Every screenplay I read seems to end its dream sequence in this way. (167)

Similarly Alex Epstein, in *Screenwriting: Writing Movies that Get Made*, claims that while flashbacks are one of the most powerful techniques of cinema, the problem is simply that they are used in a "cheesy way" (62). I would wholeheartedly agree that the same often holds true for dream and fantasy, hence the search in my thesis across a range of films for techniques that are fresh and engaging.

²⁹ This kind of advice also proliferates on the Internet. Screenwriter and teacher Blake Snyder is unequivocal: "I advise screenwriters to try to avoid the flashback and the dream sequence" (n.p.). Internet blogs such as www.munkeyfilm.com reiterate this kind of advice: "There is no quicker way to make a film professor swallow his tongue than tossing in the dream sequence. Honestly, a student film with a dream sequence is about as predictable as rough sex in a Cronenberg film" (n.p.).

Interestingly, in *How to Build a Great Screenplay*, David Howard utilises the film-dream metaphor, insisting that what an audience really wants is a “seamless dream experience”:

The goal of the storyteller should be this kind of mesmerizing experience for the audience. You have your viewers willingly giving their attention, thoughts, and emotions to the experience you have created for them. (35)

Howard speaks too of the screenwriter’s need to establish the “inner lives” of characters (204-7). There is no mention though of screening internal processes in visual terms: Howard’s emphasis is more on clarifying goals, wants, needs, fears and hopes – both within and outside the realm of the story (205).

Syd Field’s *Screenplay* sets the tone for many manuals when it comes to advising on externalising action: “First, establish your main character, then separate the components of his/her life into two basic categories: interior and exterior” (27). Field goes on to urge the aspirant writer to reveal the character’s internal conflicts visually (27). Similarly, Lisa Dethridge in *Writing Your Screenplay* distinguishes between the protagonist’s outer and inner worlds, holding that the protagonist’s problem is often the result of a clash between the two worlds, and also that the plot will often be driven by this conflict (67). She suggests that the writer may then shape the protagonist’s journey to prove how action affects psychology or vice versa: “How can you best dramatise ‘inner’ turmoil using imagery and locations in the ‘outer’ world?” (68). Dethridge’s advice draws attention to the way in which external action and settings can reflect the character’s inner journey. In fact, this is my overarching question in Chapter 5, in which I ask how Miyazaki uses otherworldly realms in order to describe his character’s emotional journeys.

A particularly useful discussion of ordinary versus magical worlds is included in Christopher Vogler’s *The Writer’s Journey*, which adapts a set of concepts from Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Vogler cites Campbell’s assertion that “a hero ventures forth from the world of common

day into a region of supernatural wonder" (81). After Campbell, Vogler proposes that threshold guardians guard the secret doors to the magical realm (112). I will draw on these analogies in discussing the use of portals in both Švankmajer and Miyazaki's films. And I will further investigate Vogler's guidelines – in relation to Campbell's theories of narratology – when I come to look at otherworldly realms in animated African films.

Yet, while manuals generally urge writers to externalise internal conflict through action, most are – as we have established – reticent to endorse overt mental externalisations such as dream. One writer who does embrace the screening of interiority on every level, effectively linking practical advice with theory, is Cherry Potter – a psychotherapist, screenwriter and author of *Screen Language: From Film Writing to Film-making*. She posits that once we are identified with a character, we often take for granted "the apparently seamless transition from seeing how the character is acting and responding in the world to experiencing the innermost recesses of their imagination" (21). We do not wonder, according to Potter, how we *know* we are in a character's mind, sharing their "dreams, memories, fantasies and even their drug-induced hallucinations and mad delusions" (21). It is precisely this audience state of being *in situ* in the character's mind that this thesis aims to investigate: how do filmmakers achieve this level of audience identification?

In Potter's view, filmmakers are well aware that the solutions do not simply involve a few technical tricks – soft-focus images, cutting to sepia or black and white, or employing weird sound effects (21). Our experience of dreams, memories and fantasies is quite different from our everyday reality, and "the challenge for filmmakers is to explore and reflect this difference" (21). The ways in which the difference is delineated is the focus of my investigation. Potter insists that the state of being "in a character's mind" is by no means a question any experienced filmmaker takes for granted: instead, screen portrayals of inner states of mind involve a highly complex use of film language, and unless filmmakers signal what is going on, the resultant

confusion may frustrate and alienate their audience (21).³⁰ Clearly the actual transition into particular states of mind is key to the screening of interiority. The question of effective techniques for conveying this kind of movement crops up repeatedly in this thesis: in relation to Cameron Crowe's pop-inspired lucid dream *Vanilla Sky*, Satoshi Kon's anime psycho-thriller *Perfect Blue*, and Švankmajer's startling juxtaposition of live action and animation in *Faust*.

Potter concludes that the way in which we handle dream, memory and fantasy is "always rooted in the character's experience, the dramatic question which motivates the character and, finally, in what the film-maker is trying to say" (47). These three questions form the basis for the next chapter, where they will be used to interrogate an array of cinematic dreams.

³⁰ Examples of highly complex – and somewhat flummoxing – use of film language arguably include Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr* (1932), David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and Takashi Shimizu's *Ju-on: The Grudge* (2004).

CHAPTER 3

Dreams that illuminate:

Character motivation and directorial vision through cinematic dream

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will argue that filmmakers can effectively use dreams to reflect a character's psychology, to throw light on the central dramatic question motivating a character, and ultimately to communicate what they as filmmakers are trying to say. The aim is to counter a common tendency that sees filmmakers, particularly those in training, being advised to avoid portraying dreams, because of the pitfalls that they can present – in terms of hackneyed symbolism and the obscuring of plot.³¹

After discussing cinematic dreams as a means for screening inner processes, this chapter enters into more detailed analysis of four films. Firstly, it investigates the clear demarcation of dreams as opposed to reality in Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957). The chapter goes on to look at the more oblique handling of dream in Satoshi Kon's *anime* film *Perfect Blue* (1999), and his extensive use of two classic fantasy devices, the mirror and the *doppelgänger*. Next, a comparative discussion is undertaken of *Abre los Ojos*, or *Open Your Eyes* (1997), directed by Alejandro Amenábar, and Cameron Crowe's Hollywood remake of the same story – *Vanilla Sky* (2001). Whereas Amenábar and Crowe use the same set of dreams to portray their characters' inner journeys and dramatic questions, subtle disparities in the content and execution of these sequences throw into sharp relief the differences in their directorial messages. Finally, an addendum to the chapter will explore the implications of its findings for the making of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*.

³¹ A warning of this kind appears, for example, in Syd Field's *Four Screenplays* (256).

3.2 Communicating interiority

In Chapter 2 I discussed the long-standing analogy between film and dream, and discussed the limitations of the analogy. In the current chapter, I look at some specific means of conveying interiority via filmed dreams. In order to do so, this chapter draws on formalist theory to identify salient techniques and patterns across films that successfully employ dreams within their structures. Because of the oneiric nature of the subject matter, and the fact that dreams are generally acknowledged to have psychological import, the chapter draws also on psychoanalytical film theory. Based on the premise that dream is a boundary state where conscious and unconscious materials mingle – and that dream is consequently not that far from fantasy – the chapter also draws on discussions of the fantastic, and on the intersection between fantasy, psychoanalysis and dream.

Richard Allen suggests that the imagination “provides a stage upon which the mind can represent to itself, in the form of fantasies, desires not otherwise realisable”, and that dreams are “the stage of the imagination that are perhaps most readily apprehensible” (125). It is this ready access to the imaginative realm – and to characters’ unconscious states – that I would argue makes dreams an indispensable filmmaking tool. Similarly, Raymond Durnat makes a case for screened dreams being rooted in a character’s experience: “the film’s job is not so much to provide ‘information’ about the characters’ minds as to communicate their ‘experience’, whether intellectual, emotional, physical or a blend of all three” (33). Cinematic dream is one means of accomplishing this job: to communicate a character’s emotional or inner experience.

Potter puts forward that dreams, memories and fantasies manifest themselves in a very similar language to that of film, and that film – like dream – compresses time:

... an experience that in reality may have lasted for years, weeks or hours is communicated in minutes or seconds of screen time

because only the essential ingredients are selected for communication. (*Image, Sound and Story* 39-40)

It seems that dream's ability to "telegraph" a character's state of mind is the most basic reason that dreams are employed within film narratives. Moreover, the elliptical nature of dreams can be poignantly conveyed via editing – as I will discuss in relation to jump cuts.

The fact that dream, like film, is a primarily visual medium, and one that employs symbolic language, makes the inclusion of dreams in films relatively seamless. Perhaps because of their visual and symbolic nature, dreams have been depicted in films since the early days of cinema.³² *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), directed by Victor Fleming, contains – among other classic film techniques – the abrupt waking from a dream. But what was highly innovative at the time was the use of Technicolor to portray Dorothy's dream world. In *The Reality Effect*, Noël Black describes the entire dream section of *The Wizard of Oz* as a "beautiful but dangerous fantasy that is ultimately renounced for Kansas' familiar black-and-white security" (215). In a number of subsequent films, switches between colour and black and white have distinguished between dream and reality respectively.³³

In *Until the End of the World*, made in 1991 but set in 1999, Wim Wenders presents media technology as an extension of the senses. He depicts a team of researchers in the Australian outback working on a technique for making visual recordings of dream images that can be played back and observed. But the project is a disaster, since experimental subjects become addicted to their recorded dream images. The addiction is described by Black as "rather a heavy-handed allegory of the seductive power of the cinematic image and its

³² Bordwell cites an early example of cinematic dream in the sleep-walking incident that ends with the protagonist falling off a building in *The Somnambulist* (1903), and which turns out to have been a dream: in the final shot the heroine is back in bed and wakes up (*Classical Hollywood Cinema* 179).

³³ There are times when the norm has been inverted, for instance in Gary Ross' *Pleasantville* (1998), in which two contemporary siblings are transported back into a 1950s era TV show, experiencing the "blandness of that artificial world" (Black 215). The real world is shown in "living" colour and the fantasy world in black and white, exactly the opposite of the use of Technicolor in *The Wizard of Oz*. This difference is at least in part due to technological change. When *The Wizard of Oz* was made in 1939, Technicolor was a brand new cinematic technique. Audiences were familiar with seeing the "real" world in black and white, whereas for modern audiences, colour has become the norm.

complicity with the viewer's dream life" (216).³⁴ Black describes Wenders' attempt to portray the dreams as one of extending the recording possibilities of film to the subjective and unconscious realms, and of transforming film into a fully interactive medium like video games or virtual reality machines (217). Black views "the attempt as being more interesting than the result" (217) – an opinion with which I concur, for the grainy images evoke fragments of home videos more than they do fleeting sojourns into the unconscious. Norbert Grob argues that because Wenders has been so involved in digital technology, he has lost touch with his own cinematic precepts:

He fails to distinguish between what should be made visible and open to scrutiny, and what should be left up to the subjective imagination of his audience. (Grob 203)

To the contrary, I maintain that filmmakers should be free to scrutinise every aspect of human experience. Yet Grob's critique does point to the dangers inherent in screening dreams. For one, being a material medium, it is impossible for film to achieve the same ineffability of dreams. However, nor can film achieve the same degree of "reality" of everyday experience – which is not to say that filmmakers do not try to do so.

The difficulty of creating dream-like illogic is exacerbated by the fact that filmmakers necessarily use dreams to build a character's dramatic motivations, and to convey particular messages to the audience. However, notwithstanding the difficulty of reproducing oneiric illogic, it is worth remembering that neither does cinema commonly present the randomness of prosaic existence. Instead, in constructing narrative, films weave pattern and story out of daily experience. There seems nothing then to prevent filmmakers from creating narrative of fragmentary dreams, yet endowing

³⁴ This is similar to the addictive power of the SQUID technology in *Strange Days*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow – also apocalyptically set in 1999 but made in 1995. The difference is that the SQUID records actual experience and watching it being played back is like living a fantasy if it is someone else's experience, or reliving a memory, if it is one's own experience that has been recorded. In this way, *Strange Days* is a comment on the technology of cinema, as well as being a critique of sexualised media violence.

these cinematic dreams with a degree of illogic that distinguishes them from the depiction of reality.

Cinema cannot produce a perfect illusion of dreaming, but it can produce filmic dreams that elucidate a character's experience and underline the character's dramatic question. Of course film characters do not necessarily have only one motivating force: many film narratives are driven by a complex interplay of questions. It is not my aim to be reductive in identifying a single dramatic question, but to determine a film's key precept, which may well interact with several further subsidiary questions.

Cinematic dream is also a powerful tool for the filmmaker to reveal a particular message. Of course this supposition hinges on an *auteur* approach, the uses and limitations of which I discussed in Chapter 2. In gauging means of communicating interiority, it makes sense to look at authorial intent, given that where filmmakers utilise dreams, it is with specific meaning in mind. It is critical for the purposes of this research to try to unpack intended thematic messages encoded in filmic dreams.

Sarah Boxer suggests that film as a visual and illusory medium is "as close to dream as you can get" (cited in Black 216). Film, although not equivalent to dream, is able to draw on visual and aural language that evokes the dream state, and in so doing is able to illuminate narrative questions. Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957) is a useful starting point for considering cinematic dreams in more detail, for it contains classic devices within a psychologically complex narrative. The protagonist experiences a series of reveries, dreams and nightmares that throw light on his unconscious motivations and unresolved issues.

3.3 *Wild Strawberries*

Wild Strawberries tells the story of Isak Borg, a 78-year-old doctor who is about to go to the University of Lund to receive his jubilee doctorate. He wakes up from a nightmare filled with death-like portents, and decides that instead of

flying, he will drive. The car journey with his daughter-in-law Marianne becomes a journey back in time – on both an historical and a personal level. Borg's first stop is at his childhood home, where he has his second dream, involving the sweetheart of his youth, Sara, who rejected him for his more sensual brother. Back in the present, he visits his mother, who has in her bitterness cut herself off from her family. After lunch, Borg dreams for the third time: nightmarish visions of professional failure, and of his dead wife sleeping with another man. As Borg's past unfolds, it becomes part of his present. A young hitchhiker comes onto the scene, a replica of his old-time sweetheart Sara. And we meet Borg's son, in whom Borg's own coldness and aloofness live on. Gradually during the course of the film, Borg gains insight into himself, and by the time he reaches Lund, he has come to realise his shortcomings. After the jubilee festivities he can rest peacefully at last, dreaming for the fourth time – this time an idyllic dream of reconciliation.

The nightmare Borg has in the beginning, in which he sees his own corpse, motivates him to re-evaluate his life – one suffused with loneliness. He is entirely shut up in his own world, and Jörn Donner identifies the film's underlying question as being "Can he get out of it?" (155). I would suggest that all four of the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries* not only reflect Borg's psychological experience, but also help to underline this dramatic question.

Philip Mosley sees the basic theme of *Wild Strawberries* as an individual's journey into self-knowledge through confrontation with the past (68). Borg's nightmares, namely his first and third dreams, are certainly his most acute moments of self-confrontation. These nightmare sequences and his more nostalgic second and fourth dreams are integrated into a structure centred on one day: in external time the film is enacted from an early morning to the evening of the same day. However, dreams two and four are, in a sense, imagined flashbacks, and so take us backward in time and disrupt the linear narrative.

Birgitta Steene argues that, from a structural point of view, *Wild Strawberries* continues the Strindbergian dream play tradition (72), the technique

Strindberg described in the preface to his *Dream Play* as seeking to “reproduce the disconnected but apparently logical form of a dream”:

On a slight groundwork of reality, imagination spins and weaves new patterns made up of memories, experiences, unfettered fancies, absurdities, and improvisations. The characters are split, double and multiply, they evaporate, crystallize, scatter and converge. But a single consciousness holds sway over all of them – that of the dreamer. (cited in Steene 72)

According to Steene, Strindberg was by no means the first to use dreams as a structural device, but he was the first to stage a dream world in the spirit of modern psychology: Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries* is conceived in that modern vein (73).³⁵

3.3.1 Dream one – the corpse

The first nightmare, which follows the film’s opening credit sequence, succinctly portrays Borg’s psyche, and establishes a symbolic language that is echoed in his later dreams. After Kristen Thompson’s neo-formalist methodology, I have included a set of still frames in order to quote the sequence pictorially (*Figure 1*). The nightmare sequence is also included as *Clip 1* in the folder labelled *Chapter 3* on the accompanying DVD. To paraphrase the sequence briefly: Borg sets out for a morning stroll in the deserted city, and sees that the hands of a clock outside a watchmaker’s shop have disappeared. When Borg takes out his own pocket watch he finds that it too has lost its hands. He then meets a male figure, but his face is deformed, almost nonexistent. Finally, Borg finds himself about to be run down by a hearse when it hits a lamppost and falls to pieces. A hand reaches out of the

³⁵ According to Steene, the film follows up on an earlier trend in the history of filmmaking, and Bergman profited from the realisation of older German directors “that the camera has a distinct advantage over the stage in projecting a psychic situation into symbolic imagery and in destroying the unities of time and place” (73).

see a cloudless sky I feel the world's coming to an end" (*Bergman on Bergman* 78).

Another aspect of the location's nightmarish quality is its creepy silence. The commentary and music are non-diegetic: Borg delivers the voiceover retrospectively as he recalls his dream. There is no atmospheric track, only distinct sound effects: the grinding of the hearse's axles as it sways against a street lamp, the distant tolling of bells, Borg's heartbeat, and a wailing that accompanies the coffin's sliding out of the hearse. Peter Cowie suggests that this wailing implies the proximity, "almost juxtaposition of Birth and Death": for the sound is identical to that made later by a baby in a dream (cited in Steene 75). Cowie sees the baby, who is rocked by Borg's sweetheart Sara, as Borg's "wishful projection" of himself (cited in Steene 75). Thus the initial nightmare contains sounds and images that portend both dream and real life events later in the film.

In Chapter 2, I discussed Christian Metz's claim that psychoanalysis ties Freud's ideas of condensation and displacement to metaphor and metonymy respectively. The opening dream sequence of *Wild Strawberries* contains a number of condensations – metaphoric images that invite a whole range of associations, all of which speak to Borg's psyche. Yet, it is Steene's view that, although the tone of Borg's dreams is easy to determine, the images used to convey the workings of his mind do not always seem fixed in their meaning (75). She suggests that the spectator is invited to partake in the dreams in much the same way as does Borg himself: "It is well to remember that Isak Borg's blindness is deep, and his road towards self-knowledge is tortuous and difficult. Hence, his dreams serve both to mystify and to clarify" (75). Arguably, however, Borg's dream can be systematically decoded – albeit the meanings are not singular or fixed – just as Borg in the end is able to reach an understanding of his own psyche.

Jesse Kalin suggests that we are able to make eventual sense of the metaphors due to their repetition and cumulative effect, whereby they make Borg's inner feelings externally visible: "We see them, and they come to inhabit our unconscious with all their suggestions and reverberations" (70). One

recurrent condensing metaphor is that of the handless clock (*Figure 2*). Kalin sees the image as ambiguous: it is not that time has stopped; it has reached the point “when time shall be no more” (68). He interprets the image as meaning also that Borg “does not know what time it really is or recognise what time is truly for” (68). One could also interpret the missing hands to mean that Borg has lost something. The lost hands could signify lost moments, lost possibilities that Borg failed to “grasp” with his own hands. Perhaps the missing hands allude to figures such as Sara that Borg failed to hold close. After Freud, one could alternatively view the missing hands, in standing in for Borg’s own loss, as involving a process of displacement – whereby there is a transfer of psychic energy from something significant to something banal (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 190-1).

Mosley points out that the handless timepieces coincide with Borg’s thumping heart (78). Significantly, this synchronisation of sound and image is repeated during Borg’s visit to his mother, who lives in a death-like world, and shows him another handless timepiece. The synchronisation seems to bespeak Borg’s mortality – the fact that he is running out of time.



Figure 2: The handless clock in Wild Strawberries

Kalin suggests that the bleeding eye in the glasses below the clock conveys Borg’s “defective ability to see” (69). The bleeding eye, in combination with the clock, serves as a classic case of condensation: the images combine the mortality, lifelessness and futility of the clock with the damaged eye’s fracture and inability to see – all of which point to Borg’s inherent failures.

Mosley sees the bleeding eye as part of a pattern of images of disintegration that dominate the opening nightmare (75). Indeed a number of fractured images fit into this pattern: the motionless figure that falls to the ground and

splits open to spill blood; the wheel of a passing horse that breaks loose and rolls towards Borg; and the arm that emerges from the coffin. The image of the arm evokes an aspect of Freud's theory of the uncanny, namely that concerning fragmented body parts.³⁶ Freud discusses "dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist" and "feet which dance by themselves" as having "something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when they prove capable of independent activity" ("The Uncanny" 366). Also evoked by the image of the corpse is that aspect of the uncanny Freud explains as a state or feeling that is most powerfully experienced "in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" ("The Uncanny" 364).

A salient technique present in the film, connected to dream in its inherent subjectivity, is that of first-person narration: Borg introduces us to the film with an explanatory voice over, which returns at various junctures. Donner points out that while the film is told in the first person, it does not use a subjective camera (159). However, this opening dream sequence is a notable exception in that it contains an extensive interaction between objective and point of view shots. We see the handless clock from Borg's point of view, and when he peers into the coffin, we see his own face staring back. Bergman cuts from a low-angle shot of Borg beyond the coffin to a high-angle shot from behind him. As Borg and his corpse struggle with one another, there is a series of alternating close-ups – so that the two images virtually merge. This merger takes place not through a dissolve, but rather through the rapidity of the cutting. Finally the camera zooms into large close-ups of the faces of Borg and his corpse, both of which go out of focus, before a cut to a similarly sized shot of Borg waking up in his bed.

Borg's abrupt awakening clearly indicates the dream's end. According to Steene, Bergman never lets Borg pass from the empirical world to the unconscious without informing the spectator that he is falling asleep (74). In fact, in *Image Sound and Story*, Potter states that the clear demarcation between

³⁶ Freud's essay "The Uncanny", 1919, suggests that the uncanny is associated with a subject's experience of people, events, places, which become suddenly and frighteningly strange, although they are, in fact, quite familiar to the subject (340-1). Freud also explains the uncanny as the return to the conscious of repressed material (363-4).

dream and waking states in this first dream serves the sequence's thematic and dramatic intentions:

...Bergman's central concern was that we ask how the Professor's dream will affect his waking life, given that he appears to be complacent and self-satisfied, yet the dream suggests the need for a dramatic confrontation with the self before death. It was necessary that we are able to distinguish clearly between dream and present reality because the issue was how the dream would affect his reality. (65)

The first effect of the dream on Borg's reality is that he decides to drive to Lund, rather than to fly, and so sets in motion a literal journey that doubles as a metaphoric one into his past and his psyche.

3.3.2 Dream two – the berries

Borg's first stop is at his childhood home, where he rediscovers the wild strawberry patch that gives the film its title. His mind wanders back and he falls asleep. A dissolve into a medium-long shot, accompanied by nostalgic piano music, changes the house into its former state. This second dream sequence also serves as a flashback, and in the voiceover, Borg articulates this merging of dream with memory:

I don't know how it happened but the day's clear reality changed into the shapes of a dream. I don't even know if it was a dream or if it was memories that appeared with the strength of real events. (*Wild Strawberries* DVD)

Eugene Archer has suggested that the wild strawberries that trigger the dream have the equivalent of Marcel Proust's famed *petite Madeleine* that the narrator dips into his cup of tea to begin his search for lost time (cited in Steene 75-6). In addition to serving a catalytic function, the strawberries are symbolic in themselves: Donner claims that the strawberries symbolise purity

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dream events that project Borg's psyche; events in the real world uncannily reflect his inner experience.

3.3.3 Dream three – the mirror

In the third dream, oneiric illogic takes over completely, as the interior of the house becomes an examination room where Borg is subjected to tests of his professional competence. Mosley sees the soft focus mid-close-up of Borg shakily pouring water into a glass as demonstrating his fear, intensified by incomprehensible words on a blackboard (77). Borg fails an examination because he can only find his own eye in the microscope – suggesting that he can see nothing beyond himself. He is pronounced guilty and sentenced to loneliness, before being led through a swamp to witness his wife having sex with another man in a forest clearing. Here he is forced to hear her accusations, and to acknowledge his own partial culpability. This recognition process is slowly beginning to answer the film's dramatic question: "Will Borg be able to get out of his closed world?"

This third dream sequence contains a seminal moment of self-examination, when Borg's youthful sweetheart, Sara, holds up a mirror to Borg, to reflect his 78-year-old face (Figure 3). Mirror moments are typically about self-reflection, and here Sara is forcing Borg to look at who he has become. When Borg tries to ignore his reflection, Sara insists that "he can't bear the truth" (*Wild Strawberries* DVD). Mosley sees the sequence of reverse shots as emphasising their mutual alienation (77).



Figure 3: Ingrid Thulin and Victor Sjöström in the mirror shot in *Wild Strawberries*

In *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, Branigan analyses this mirror shot within a discussion of focalisation – our experiencing the film world “through” a character – a concept introduced in this thesis in Chapter 2. Branigan maintains that focalisation through a character depends on levels of narration that “define and ground the character who is to have an experience” (104). These other levels of narration, according to Branigan, are “always superimposed in a film; occasionally several may be relatively explicit, and may even be in conflict with one another” (104). The mirror moment contains such conflicting narrations: in fact, Branigan proposes that it is the result of at least six different levels of narration operating simultaneously (104). I have summarised Branigan’s analysis thus:

- 1)Bergman presents a story in which the character Isak Borg becomes the diegetic narrator.
 - 2)We see Borg narrating the story about himself.
 - 3)Borg, an externally focalised character, falls asleep.
 - 4)He dreams of himself at his present age of 78 in a new locale.
 - 5)In his dream he witnesses his 20-year-old sweetheart confront his 78-year-old self. She holds up a mirror.
 - 6)The mirror reflects Borg’s 78-year-old face.
- (104-5)

Branigan argues that this shot’s narrative structure may be represented as a sequence of six frames within frames as follows:

[[[[[. . . mirror reflection . . .]]]]]]]]]]

The power of the shot, according to Branigan, derives in part from its “sudden knotting together of distinct narrations to create contradiction and paradox” (105). He sees “the subtle intricacy of this moment” as depending upon “the creation of various levels within the narration that are posited as logically distinct, followed by a transgression of the boundaries” (105). It seems that this degree of contradiction and paradox is acceptable to the viewer precisely because the moment is presented within the context of a dream, and in this way, the dream becomes a site of transgression.

Bergman stated that "Film as an art form... should communicate psychic states, not merely project pictures of external action" (cited in Mosley 68). The dreams of *Wild Strawberries* certainly communicate psychic states, but this is not to say that the dreams' meanings are fixed or singular: there is room for interpretation of the multiple meanings encoded in Bergman's condensations and displacements. Arguably, even the multiplicity of meaning points to Borg's own confusion. Branigan's analysis of the mirror shot usefully demonstrates the levels of conflicting narration that can characterise films portraying dream, and I will employ his method of breaking down such narrative layers when I come to discuss *Perfect Blue*.

3.3.4 Dream four – reconciliation

When he wakes from his third dream Borg continues to Lund to receive the award amidst pomp and ceremony. After he goes to bed, the final reconciliation occurs in the fourth and last dream sequence. (See *Clip 2, Chapter 3* on DVD.) The shot of Borg in bed dissolves to a long shot of Borg's childhood home, where everything is idyllic once more. Sara leads Borg – as his current rather than his young self – to see his parents sitting by the lakeshore, waving to him. Mosley believes that at this point Borg "replaces fear and contempt of his parents with a vision of eternal familial communion" (79). It is Kalin's view that, by the end, "Borg is able to see who and where he is and achieves the capacity to be both actor and audience at the same time" – a capacity that for Bergman is "the closest to wisdom we can achieve" (67).

In each dream Borg's experience is central. Steene holds that Borg's dream visions are motivated by his involvement in a given situation, and that they correspond in mood to his state of mind at the moment when he has a dream (74). Certainly in the first dream, which takes place when Borg is still aloof and withdrawn, the setting is nightmarish and full of death-like imagery; whereas the last dream, which takes place after his self-reconciliation, is idyllic in tone. Moreover, the dramatic question – *Can Borg escape his closed world?* – motivates his every dream, and is at last answered affirmatively in the final dream, when Borg's parents wave to him from afar. This *denouement* reflects what Bergman describes as the driving force in *Wild Strawberries*: "a

desperate attempt" to justify himself to "mythologically oversized parents" (*Bergman on Bergman* 22). *Wild Strawberries* may serve as Bergman's self-justification on a personal level, but every dream also serves to communicate what he seems to imply in a broader sense: that we need to look deep within to acknowledge who we are, and to recognise how the past informs our present.

Potter has indicated why Bergman draws clear bounds between dream and sleep in *Wild Strawberries*: the very point is how the dream will *affect* the reality. The audience always knows when Borg is awake or dreaming. However, Noël Black points out the contemporary reticence to employ the convention popularised by *The Wizard of Oz*:

...at the close of the filmed century that pioneered the recording of reality, and at the dawn of the digital age of the virtually real – the convention of the abrupt awakening from a bad dream has been reversed: the dream *is* the reality. In 1999 the heroine's nightmares of a psychotic killer turn out to be true in Neil Jordan's *In Dreams*, Kevin Bacon's character in *Stir of Echoes* has nightmares about a corpse in his house that turns out to be real, and the boy in *The Sixth Sense* has visions of the dead that prove to be valid. Also in the same year, the besieged heroine of Kon Satoshi's animated psychothriller *Perfect Blue* undergoes what appears to be a mental breakdown in which her nightmares appear to take on a reality of their own and become a real threat.

(215)

Indeed, *Perfect Blue* provides a valuable counter-point to *Wild Strawberries*, in that it switches frequently between reality and fiction, often with no warning that any alteration in reality has taken place until after the switch – if indeed there is any indication at all.

3.4 *Perfect Blue*

To give an idea of the ways in which dream and reality intertwine in *Perfect Blue*: Mima Kirigoe, a 21-year-old pop idol, abandons her music career to become an actress in a television psychodrama, only to be haunted by a malign version of her former pop-star self. She also finds the details of her life posted on an Internet homepage, as a crazed fan called Me-Mania stalks her and reports her every move. Regardless, Mima forges ahead with her new career. She is coerced into taking part in a chilling rape scene and into posing for nude photographs, whereupon the plots of real life and the TV series begin to merge. The show's producer and screenwriter are both gruesomely murdered, in scenes that reflect the TV drama in which Mima plays a schizophrenic character who performs similar murders. Soon Mima loses all track of dream and reality – even consulting the Internet homepage to find out where she has been and what she has done. At the film's climax, Mima's agent Rumi turns upon her in a terrifying attack. It is revealed that it was Rumi who staged the killings and hired Me-Mania to kill Mima. In a final showdown, Mima defeats Rumi, who ends up in a psychiatric hospital, while Mima goes on to become a successful actress.



Figures 4 and 5: Mima as a pop idol; Mima's stalker Me-Mania in *Perfect Blue*

Fantasy shares significant kinship with dream in that it also wells up in the imagination and the unconscious. Although we exert less control over dream than we do over fantasy, I would argue that filmmakers employ dream to serve a similar function as they might use fantasy: to bespeak a character's psychological and emotional state, and to underline the dramatic question motivating a character. Kon merges dream and fantasy in *Perfect Blue* so that they are to all intents and purposes indistinguishable. Certainly, in portraying Mima's dream world, Kon makes extensive use of two classic fantasy devices,

the mirror and the *doppelgänger*, in sequences that could be read as oneiric or fantastic.

3.4.1 *Anime* dreams

Tasha Robinson describes *Perfect Blue*'s success as lying in "the twisted, self-referential storyline that inter-cuts reality with fantasy so fluidly that viewers inevitably take on Mima's shattered point of view, unable to distinguish the truth until the stunning conclusion" (n.p.). What is more, Kon's use of *anime* renders fantasy and reality on the same flat plane, as equal parts of Mima's experience. Joel Black accordingly raises the question as to whether dreams are different from reality in the fantasy world of animation:

Are dreams (or nightmares) just dreams or are they as real as anything else in the film? Is it possible to dream in animation, and if not, how is it possible to ever wake up? (215-6)

There is a case for saying that, because animation is by its nature already at a further remove from reality than is live action, the entire film takes on a dream-like quality that undermines the dream/reality dualism. Moreover, Kon employs a "limited animation" style, which Thomas Lamarre views as characteristic of much Japanese *anime* (329-68). This style has the effect of showing characters floating through space in a dream-like manner, as less attention is given to animating every single step when characters walk, and more attention is given to lyricism and atmosphere.

In *Perfect Blue*, Kon uses *anime* in tailored ways in order to express Mima's mental state. For instance, there are a number of jump cuts, the purpose of which Kon has described in an interview with Tom Mes in the online journal *Midnight Eye*:

We'd cut fast from one thing to another as if it were a fight scene, even if there wasn't any action involved – it helped emphasise Mima's sense of confusion.... (n.p.)

Kon explains that as he and the animation team progressed with the film, especially in its latter half, they decided to cut faster and faster from scene to scene. This progressively quick editing certainly contributes to the increasingly crazed confusion present both in Mima and in the viewer. Kon further claims that he used imaging techniques to connect different scenes by “piling action scenes or images one on top of the other” (cited in Mes n.p.).

Mima’s real and nightmare worlds are connected by this kind of “image conglomeration” in a montage sequence that cuts rapidly between a man being stabbed and naked images of Mima posing for a photo shoot. (See *Clip 3, Chapter 3* on DVD.) The murder scene appears to be Mima’s nightmare, which is based, in turn, on a murder she enacted in the drama series. The inter-cutting between Mima’s stripping and the murder underlines the level of degradation that Mima undergoes in the photo shoot, and the traumatic effect that it has on her psyche. The montage accelerates to a dizzy crescendo, before cutting to Mima jolting awake in her bed. She soon finds bloodied clothes in her cupboard that seem to implicate her as murderer. Due to the rapid piling up of images, Mima’s inner and outer worlds are barely distinguishable at this point – underlining her dramatic question, *Will Mima discover who she really is?*

Kon’s quest to create a style that underlines Mima’s state of mind and reflects her dramatic question sees his deliberate rejection of many well-worn techniques. In the interview with Mes, Kon claims that with animation, the style is frequently fixed, and depictions of dreams follow set patterns. He refers to such hackneyed techniques as wavy lines on the screen; the switch to sepia tones; the cream flowing to the top of coffee to create a whirlpool; and a close-up of someone’s eyes (n.p.). This kind of editing he sees as “totally boring”, and believes that there are many more ways of introducing dreams and flashbacks:

Even if the shot or the scene changes, they must be linked within the flow of the story and I thought that it would be

interesting if the viewers did not immediately grasp they were watching a flashback or a dream. (cited in Mes n.p.)

The dreams are thus not treated as separate entities, but carry the narrative forward to the same extent as do the waking scenes. Kon claims that viewers are “too used to being treated kindly” and that he has deliberately broken the pattern of “sleepy continuity” (cited in Mes n.p.). Consequently there are no cross-fades, dissolves or establishing shots to link scenes with different locations or time settings, or to convey that we are entering dream territory. For instance, there is a scene in which Mima the actress is delivering lines on the set for the drama, and is suddenly waking in her bed, only to be seen a moment later back on the set. Interestingly, although we as viewers are not given the usual cues as to when we are entering a dream, we are frequently cued in retrospect as to the dream status of a scene – via shots of Mima awakening. The audience’s quest to determine what is dream and what is reality is in this way constantly undermined.

3.4.2 Layered narration

Cutting without warning from scene to scene and from location to location, Kon interweaves layers of reality with Mima's dreams. But there is a third layer of narration: scenes from the appropriately named show *Double Bind*, on which she is cutting her teeth as an actress. This third layer in a sense reflects both Mima’s dreams and her reality.³⁹

The multiple levels of narration reveal themselves in their most extreme complexity in a scene from *Double Bind*, in which Mima's character Yoko is diagnosed as suffering from multiple personality disorder. (See *Clip 4*,

³⁹ Indeed terminology exists to describe different layers of narration in film and literature, namely “metalepsis” and “reality bleeding”. According to Debra Malina, in *Breaking the Frame: Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject*, metalepsis is a disruptive narrative strategy involving the transgression of boundaries between mutually exclusive narrative levels or zones such as interiority / exteriority, past / present / future or parallel dimensions (1). In an article entitled “Metaleptic Machines”, Marie-Laure Ryan maintains that ontological metalepsis involves “a transgression of levels that causes contradiction”, such that one level of narrative reality “invades” another and derails the metaphysical basis by which we usually understand existence (451).

Chapter 3 on DVD.) She is convinced that she is really Mima: in other words, the character that Mima plays in the television drama confuses herself with Mima the actress and former pop idol who is playing her character. Jonathan Romney describes this as a “baffling moment soon revealed as only a provisional representation of Mima's predicament” (n.p.).

This baffling moment warrants careful unpacking. It starts with Mima waking from a nightmare that is ostensibly also a scene from the drama, in which her character Yoko enacts a murder. Mima awakes in a wide top shot that is used in exact replica at several other points of the film. We cut to a medium close-up, with Mima's reflection in the mirror behind her, in a space that could still be her bedroom, yet in its neutrality could also be part of another location. Mima proceeds to rotate from this neutral position in a leftward motion through space. The camera simultaneously pans left with her, to reframe on a two-shot that shows Mima – now in actress mode – facing the psychologist character of the drama. The psychologist asks her name, and Mima's television character Yoko replies that she is a pop star, then corrects herself quickly – “No, an actress”. The psychologist leaves the glass booth, and tells two men outside that Yoko has dissociative identity disorder, or multiple personality syndrome. Yoko sees herself as a new actress, Kirigoe Mima, and sees her original persona as nothing more than a character in a drama. As the psychologist explains all this to the observers, Mima's character is seen speaking noiselessly through the glass, as if trapped in a cage.

After Branigan, the self-reflexive construction of this scene can be unravelled to show the following conflicting narrations at work:

- 1) The mirror shot at the scene's opening is a physical reflection of
- 2) the “real” Mima who has abandoned her pop career for acting, and in her self-turmoil is being pursued by
- 3) a ghost or double of her former pop idol self, who is finally transformed into
- 4) Mima's agent Rumi, a former pop idol, who ends up in a psychiatric institution, thinking she is Mima the pop idol.

- 5) The “real” Mima (2) in this mirror shot is playing a schizophrenic young woman, who thinks that
- 6) her real self, Yoko Takukura, was just a character in a drama, and that she is really
- 7) Kirigoe Mima, a new pop star and actress...
- 8) as observed by the viewer, who identifies with Mima.

Branigan’s description of the mirror shot in *Wild Strawberries* as deriving its power from its “sudden knotting together of distinct narrations to create contradiction and paradox” (105) also holds true of this scene in *Perfect Blue*. The contradiction and paradox inflicted on the viewer in fact reflect Mima’s confusion as the boundary between dream and reality is blurred. Thus I have proposed the eighth level of narration, given that as much as there are doubles within the text, the film spectator is another kind of double. Of course this opens up the vast arena of spectatorship theory, touched on in the literature review.⁴⁰ Here I simply raise the fact that, given the identity search that runs throughout *Perfect Blue*, we as viewers perhaps do not remain entirely ourselves, but take on something of Mima’s confused screen persona.

There is a similar transgression between levels of narration in a scene where Rumi visits Mima in her apartment. (See *Clip 5, Chapter 3* on DVD.) Mima expresses concern that her other personality – “my other self that I buried deep in my heart” – could start acting on its own. As she says this, she slides rightwards across the screen, the busy detail of the apartment being replaced by a flat background. A hand enters frame-right to touch her shoulder comfortingly, as someone says, “It’s all right. There is no way illusions can come to life”. Mima responds “Rumi?” before we cut wide to see her no longer in her apartment with her agent, but on set with the psychologist character and the television crew. The sliding motion across the screen has replaced a cut between one spatial and temporal location and another.⁴¹ Startling in its unexpected transition, the sliding seems to reflect the

⁴⁰ See page 33, where I discuss Metz’s claim that behind every incredulous spectator, who knows that screen events are fictional, lies a credulous one, who believes these events to be true (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 71-2).

⁴¹ A live action variant of this technique is employed in the panning movements used in *Layer Cake* to transit smoothly from one space and time to another.

frightening slippage between reality, the show, and the dream that is taking place within Mima's mind.

Mima's confusion is embedded in the very structure of the film's narrative so that it takes on the same sort of irrational fluidity she herself is shown as experiencing. The replaying of events creates a nightmarish loop, which evokes what Freud describes as "involuntary repetition" and as "fateful and inescapable". He sees the "factor of the repetition of the same thing" as arousing an uncanny feeling, and as recalling "the sense of helplessness experienced in some dream states" ("The Uncanny" 359-60). The exact replication of images at different points in the film, for instance that of Mima waking up time and again in the identical position, is certainly unsettling in its effect both on Mima and on the audience.

The uncanny repetition of events and images contributes to the blurring of the line between subjective and objective perspectives in *Perfect Blue*. Kon speaks about the way in which he transgresses the usual boundaries between these standpoints: "For an outsider, the dreams and the film within a film are easy to separate from the real world. But for the person who is experiencing them, everything is real" (cited in Mes n.p.). In fact, the viewer – I speak for myself at least – feels much of the bewilderment that the character experiences. Perhaps the merging of reality and dream evokes for the audience the aspect of the uncanny that, according to Freud, is concerned with where "the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced" ("The Uncanny" 367).

Kon further effaces the divide between reality and dream in that he makes no graphic distinction between conscious and unconscious states. The only graphic shift is the *manga* imagery used to describe pop culture. Romney points to an instance: "an excessively baroque flash of *manga* art – a generic big-eyed space girl – invades the screen, looking much more three-dimensional than the film's real world" (n.p.). (See *Clip 6, Chapter 3* on DVD.)

It is true that the "real world" of the film is plain and flat by comparison with the pop culture icons. Romney suggests that the very execution of the animation in *Perfect Blue* becomes "a complex metaphor for Mima's reality, in

which the everyday becomes a colour-drained place of exile from the pop universe" (n.p.). The quotation of pop and *manga* images stands in contrast to the bleak images of a faceless Tokyo. In this way the iconic pop language serves as a layer of dream-like existence running parallel with the bland urban environment. By creating another level of visual complexity, the *manga* and pop images not only contribute to the theme of fame and celebrity that runs through the film, but also undermine the reality / dream divide – which enjoys no such visual demarcation.

When asked in an interview whether there was a message he wanted to deliver through the film, Kon initially laughs wryly and claims that he is not sure that there is anything in particular. But soon he starts to muse:

Perhaps it would be "losing reality" ... the real life images and the virtual images come and go quickly in the film. When you are watching the film, you sometimes feel like losing yourself in whichever world you are watching, real or virtual. But after going back and forth between the real world and the virtual world, you eventually find your own identity through your own powers. (*Perfect Blue* DVD)

Kon's message is seemingly about "finding oneself". It seems that the blurring of dream and reality, and their ultimate re-separation at the film's conclusion, are crucial in communicating this search for self-integration.

3.4.3 Seeing double

Mima's shifts between reality and dream are characterised by the repeated appearance of her phantom self or *doppelgänger*, who renders Mima's crisis of identity physically manifest and creates an uneasy feeling in the viewer. This recalls the uncanny sense created with the appearance of the double in *Wild Strawberries*, where the same actor plays both the hitchhiker and Borg's youthful sweetheart.

In a review of *Perfect Blue*, Richard Scheib suggests that the actress is really a split personality created by Mima to deal with the stress of being a pop star, and the *doppelgänger* is in fact her real self coming through. Scheib sees the TV show as a projection of the repressed memories of an “abusive childhood” (n.p.). I disagree wholeheartedly with Scheib’s analysis, as there is little to suggest that Mima is stressed by being a pop star: she seems only to worry when she becomes an actress. Her *doppelgänger* is seemingly a direct result of her trauma around becoming an actress: after all, what is acting, but displacing one’s own identity? Furthermore, Mima is clearly an actress by the film’s end, when we are ostensibly very much in “real” territory.

Scheib points out that at the film’s “puzzling conclusion” the *doppelgänger* and the various assassinations “are mundanely revealed to be the mere machinations of one of the heroine’s friends” (n.p.). I agree with Scheib that the *denouement* is puzzling, but contest his position that the *doppelgänger* can be explained away as Rumi’s “machination”. While Rumi could conceivably have been behind the stalker Me-Mania in creating the hoax homepage, and in assassinating the producer and writer of the TV show, a haunting shadow self has been present in Mima’s mind regardless of Rumi’s actions. The way in which the *doppelgänger* bounces along streetlamps and appears in mirrors defies logical explanation, and is certainly not something that Rumi could have orchestrated. Although Mima’s double is displaced by Rumi’s real presence in the final scenes, the *doppelgänger* that appears in private to Mima before this point is nonetheless an imagined shadow self, defying logical explanation.



Figure 6: Rumi replaces Mima’s double in the final scenes of *Perfect Blue*

Possibly Mima’s *doppelgänger* is, in fact, “transferred” onto Rumi at the film’s climax. This “transference” takes place as a series of dissolves between the

doppelgänger and Rumi, who is dressed up in a wig and Mima's former pop star outfit. Rosemary Jackson points out that "figures who attempt [a] return to undifferentiation, in fantastic tales, are doomed to failure" (90-1). She writes that most versions of the double "terminate with the madness, suicide or death of the divided subject: self cannot be united with 'other' without ceasing to be" (91). It seems that for Mima to achieve reintegration, it is required that her agent sacrifice her own sanity. Mima's words in the film's final scene, "I wouldn't be where I am today without her," then take on a particular pertinence: by Rumi "becoming" Mima's double, Mima is able to achieve reintegration.

In discussing the splitting of characters, Rosemary Jackson argues that "the idea of multiplicity is no longer a metaphor, but is literally realised – self transforms in selves" (50). In "Nightmare and the Horror Film", Noël Carroll identifies this multiplication process as "spatial fission", which "distributes the conflict over space through the creation of doubles" (168-70). According to Carroll, spatial fission involves a character or set of characters being multiplied into one or more new facets, each standing for another aspect of the self: "generally one that is either hidden, ignored, repressed or denied by the original character" ("Nightmare" 166-7). Mima quite clearly articulates this denial of her former self: "Maybe she is more like me than myself, the self that I hid deep in my heart" (*Perfect Blue* DVD).

Her repressed self reappears in malevolent form, taking on her own personality and agency – a process that Tzvetan Todorov describes as follows:

The multiplication of personality, taken literally, is an immediate consequence of the possible transition between matter and mind: we are several persons mentally, we become so physically. (116)

Perfect Blue brims over with images that bespeak the multiplicity of Mima's character: there are images of her on the TV screens as she passes a shop window; the multiple shots of her face on the screens of the *Double Bind* editing suite; and the media images of her pop idol persona pasted all over

Me-Mania's room. Mima's reflection also appears numerous times in mirrors throughout *Perfect Blue*, which serves to underline her dislocation, and on a practical level to introduce the ghost of her former self.

In fact, Carroll writes that films that employ spatial fission commonly employ some mechanism of reflection – a portrait, a mirror or shadows – as the pretext for doubling (“Nightmare” 167). The first such reflective device is a train window. (See *Clip 7, Chapter 3* on DVD.) Mima is on her way home after a tough day of acting when her double, dressed in her former pop star outfit, suddenly appears leering at her in the place of her own reflection. A passing train wipes out the haunting image, so that Mima sees her own reflection once more.

There are several further instances in which the virtual Mima arrives on the scene via reflective surfaces: a bathroom mirror, the shiny side of the staircase, a car window, and the glass divide in a recording studio. Leo Bersani holds that mirrors offer

...a spatial representation of an intuition that our being can never be adequately enclosed within any present formulation – any formulation here and now – of our present being. It is as if the experience of perceiving ourselves elsewhere suggested the possibility of our becoming something else. Mirrors represent as a phenomenon of distance our capacity for unpredictable metamorphoses. (208)

Endorsing this notion of mirror as distancing tool, Rosemary Jackson says that “by presenting images of the self in another space... the mirror provides versions of self transformed into another” (87). She believes that the mirror uses distance and difference to suggest the instability of the “real” on this side of the looking-glass (88). The preponderance of Mima's mirror reflections suggest the instability of the real, and facilitate the splitting of her self into her double.

Mima's computer screen also serves as a kind of mirror, as her *doppelgänger* leers out and taunts her from her hoax homepage. (See *Clip 8, Chapter 3* on DVD.) This is apt, given that the notion of a double seems to have first taken hold of Mima's mind via the selfsame website, which "mirrors" her life in its detailed reports on her thoughts and actions. The homepage is significantly called "Mima's Room" – connoting a kind of space, albeit a virtual one. The use of the homepage tellingly recalls Kon's statement about virtual spaces, and how the film is perhaps about "losing reality" (*Perfect Blue* DVD).

Certainly the Internet in *Perfect Blue* serves as a precarious mirror realm, where one can lose any coherent sense of identity and reality. To cite Kon's words once more, "But after going back and forth between the real world and the virtual world, you eventually find your own identity through your own powers" (*Perfect Blue* DVD). The process of regaining stability involves, then, a systematic separation out from a fracturing virtual space.

Indeed, it is Rosemary Jackson's view that classical unities of space, time and character are "threatened with dissolution" in fantastic texts (46). She holds that "the limited nature of space has inserted into it an additional dimension", and that this additional space is frequently narrowed down to an "enclosure" where the fantastic has become the norm (50). She points out that a number of modern fantasies, including Hitchcock's *Psycho*, rely upon the Gothic enclosure as "a space of maximum transformation and horror" (47). There is a sense in which the "Mima's Room" homepage is a site of transformation in that it provides a portal for Mima's *doppelgänger*. The homepage is also a site of horror in introducing into Mima's thoughts the notion of a stalker and in haunting her with its accounts of her "double life", so much so that Mima reads about her alleged movement before asking herself, "Did I really go shopping in Harajuku today?"

It is telling that Mima's apartment is likewise referred to as "Mima's Room", and too becomes a "virtual space" in serving as a site of slippage into the fantasy or dream realm. Mima's apartment is also a kind of Gothic enclosure: time after time, Mima awakes from a nightmare, sprawled in the exact same position – only to find herself within yet another nightmare. Moreover, the apartment reflects Mima's state of mind through the film. Her cute

belongings that are neatly arranged to begin with, are later strewn about – even bloodied – and her pet fish die from neglect. On a number of occasions we zoom or cut from a wide shot of the street into the singularly lit up space of Mima's apartment, as if honing into her imagination: Mima's increasingly chaotic living space becomes a metaphor for her entropic state of mind.

Kon thus uses dream to reflect Mima's psychology, to illuminate her dramatic question, and to communicate his message. Firstly, his use of nightmare imagery is in keeping with Mima's disarrayed psyche: the jump cuts and abrupt transitions between dream and reality underline this confusion. Secondly, the dream sequences, together with the use of the *doppelgänger*, bespeak the film's theme of identity, and constantly reiterate Mima's dramatic question: *Will she find her true self?* Mima at last provides an answer in the film's final line, with a chirpy "Yes, I'm real". She voices her assertion over the film's concluding shot, which shows Mima's reflection in her car's rear-view mirror, gazing back with perfect composure – *sans* any shadow self. Thirdly, the use of dream, which invades and subsumes Mima's existence – veritably tearing her apart before she can piece herself together once more – conveys Kon's central message about the necessity of finding oneself, and one's place in the world, through struggle and exploration.

The multi-layered structure of *Perfect Blue* is not dissimilar to that used by Alejandro Amenábar in *Abre Los Ojos*, and in turn, by Cameron Crowe in his remake of the same film in *Vanilla Sky*. In *Perfect Blue*, the audience's own bewilderment at the film's structure mirrors Mima's inability to distinguish dream from reality. The same is true of our experience of *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*, in which we are drawn into the protagonist's state of mind through the interplay of dream and waking states.

3.5 *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*

Abre Los Ojos and its Hollywood remake, *Vanilla Sky*, both tell of a young, wealthy and handsome playboy who has led a hedonistic life prior to the start of the film. This protagonist is essentially the same character, but is called

César in the Spanish film and David Ames in the American film.⁴² The protagonist's carefree or careless lifestyle is set to change when he meets Sofía, a mime artist in *Abre los Ojos* and a dancer in *Vanilla Sky*.⁴³ César/David falls in love for the first time, but as a consequence, one of his former conquests, Nuria/Julie, commits suicide by crashing her car with him inside it. He awakes from a coma to find his face destroyed. He relates all this in flashback to the psychiatrist, Antonio/McCabe, who is trying to evaluate his mental state for the purpose of a criminal trial. After César/David's disfigurement, he begins to have a series of disorienting experiences, culminating in his arrest for the murder of a woman said to be Sofía but whom he believes to be Nuria/Julie. It is gradually revealed that, shortly after his disfigurement, César/David signed a contract with Life Extension to be cryogenically preserved, and to experience lucid and lifelike virtual reality dreams. He then committed suicide and was placed in cryogenic suspension. His experiences from the midpoint of the movie onward have been a dream, spliced into his actual life and replacing his true memories. At the end of the film he elects to be resurrected in his future.

3.5.1 Echoed dreams

Crowe has referred to "covering" rather than remaking Amenábar's film – a term that Anne White puts down to Crowe's previous career as a rock journalist (189). Crowe's version follows the original plot closely, and he faithfully uses the same set of dreams as does Amenábar: starting with the opening nightmare sequence of being alone in the city, followed by the dream in the park of idyllic love with Sofía, and ending with the extended lucid dream sequence.

⁴² Unfortunately, the reference to Cesare is lost in the USA remake. Cesare was the somnambulist in the *Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919: dir. Robert Wiene) a seminal German Expressionist film. Significantly, Cesare was controlled by the evil Dr Caligari and hypnotised into committing murders while asleep. In using the same name for his protagonist, Amenábar is consciously referencing the film, as reflected in the sombre tone of *Abre los Ojos*; however, there is no trace of the film's influence on Crowe's treatment of *Vanilla Sky*. The theme of wisdom wrought from self-understanding carries through in the use of the name Sofía.

⁴³ Sofía is played in both by Penélope Cruz, adding an odd note of post-modern intertextuality – and even a hint of uncanny repetition – to the experience of watching *Vanilla Sky* in conjunction with *Abre los Ojos*.

As in *Perfect Blue*, in both *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*, the very confusion between dream and reality reflects the characters' perplexed inner states. Furthermore, the dreams underline the shared dramatic question: *What stands in the way of David/ César finding true love?* This question encompasses his psychological and sociological barriers to intimacy, namely confronting his class status and his behavioural issues derived from childhood. The question further incorporates the secrets of cryogenics, which effectively stop him from moving on. The answers are slowly revealed as we learn of the protagonist's past, and the mysteries of cryogenics are gradually revealed.

In keeping with the comparable functions of the dreams in *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*, the salient techniques used in their depictions are frequently similar, and at times recall those for conveying dream in *Wild Strawberries* and *Perfect Blue*. Repetition is employed where César/ David's dream of meeting Sofía in the park, which takes place immediately after the accident, is replayed subsequent to "the splice", described by Edmund Ventura (or "Tech Support") as the instant at which reality ends, and the lucid dream begins. It is apt that the lucid dream opens with the protagonist's most ardent desire – depicting a scene of romantic love with Sofía. But the uncanny nature of the repetition points to the fact that all is not as it seems: this is lucid dream, not reality. Repetition is used to similar uncanny effect in *Wild Strawberries* when Borg's mother takes out a handleless watch that echoes that of his nightmare the previous night; and in *Perfect Blue* where the exact same portions of scenes are repeated – to Mima's bewilderment and ours. As discussed earlier, repetition is uncanny because of the strange return of the familiar: in fact, in a self-referential moment, the characters in *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky* even discuss the effects of *déjà vu*.

On occasion both *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky* employ the motif of the mirror, used in *Wild Strawberries* at a moment of self-acknowledgement and truth, and in *Perfect Blue* to introduce Mima's *doppelgänger* and to exemplify her divided self. Both César and David look into their bathroom mirror in the opening dream sequence, and again in the waking scene that follows. The act conveys vanity in the most literal sense, but also foreshadows the self-exploration that will ensue. In *Vanilla Sky*, David looks at his reflection and

plucks a grey hair, so also instigating the theme of “defying time”. In both films the mirror is later used in order to effect transitions and to enact fantasies – good and bad. In *Abre los Ojos*, but not in *Vanilla Sky*, there is a moment in the real life club scene where César looks into the bathroom mirror and fantasises that his face is whole once more (See Clip 9, Chapter 3 on DVD.). The flipside of this fantasy is the horrifying regression that takes place when the purchased dream starts going askew, and César sees what ought to be a perfect face – monstrous once more in the bathroom mirror. David has the same nightmare in *Vanilla Sky*. (See Clips 10 and 11, Chapter 3 on DVD.)

The moment when César/David starts to see himself as disfigured again, is one of fission, in which he becomes a kind of changeling. For it is shortly after seeing his deformed reflection that he suffocates Sofía, re-envisioning her as Nuria/Julie. In “Nightmare and the Horror Film” Noël Carroll defines this process as temporal fission, as opposed to spatial fission and the creation of doubles – as in Mima’s *doppelgänger* (168). According to Carroll, temporal fission is usually marked by shape changing, and is “often self-consciously concerned with repression” (“Nightmare” 168). César/David has certainly repressed his former self in dreaming of a new life in which he is no longer manipulative and shallow, and is capable of real love. His monstrous face is a projection of his darker side, which comes to the fore shortly before he enacts the murder. Interestingly, Carroll points out that changeling films, such as *The Werewolf of London* and *The Cat People*, “eventuate in the monster attacking its lover” (“Nightmare” 168). This is precisely what César/David does, albeit unwittingly. Although *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky* by no means belong to this genre, there is a sense in which César/David is a changeling. For he is living a new life in his virtual reality or lucid dream: he has a new face and personality. It is as if his old self is now re-emerging from his guilt-ridden unconscious, and is rendered monstrously visible in the mirror reflection.

Although techniques like repetition, and motifs like the mirror are more or less constant across *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*, Crowe at times presents dreams in a more stylised manner. There are his surreally coloured skies – vanilla perhaps – in the lucid dream sequence, whence the film takes its title. Crowe identifies the altered skyscape as the first “clue” that we are in dream

territory (*Vanilla Sky* DVD). Another use of stylisation on the part of Crowe is in the use of a long lens in filming the park dream sequence. The resulting shallow focus renders David and Sofia intimately close-up, and leaves the rest of the world as a dreamy blur. Amenábar shoots the same sequence with a wide lens, which keeps the dream world in the same sharp focus as the real one. The long lens also tends to be characterised by more intimate framing, which affects the viewer's impression of the relationship between characters and inflects the experience of spectatorial identification with characters.

Despite Crowe's attempts at emphasising the dreamlike, *Vanilla Sky* – like *Abre los Ojos* – makes little visual distinction between reality and dream. The effect is to underline César/David's perplexity, just as the non-differentiation between animation for dream and reality in *Perfect Blue* bespeaks Mima's own bewilderment. Xan Brooks reads further into the lack of visual demarcation in *Vanilla Sky*:

...The whole of Crowe's film – be it “real life” or “lucid dream”, sunny scene or dark disturbance – has the same airbrushed, hyper-real quality. *Vanilla Sky* is not a thriller about a man jolted between solid reality and nightmare fiction. Instead, it's a portrait of two parallel unrealities that reflect and inform each other to such a degree that you can barely see the join. (64)

Certainly the quality of both dream and reality in *Vanilla Sky* is hyper-real, so that the two states reflect and inform each other, just as they do in *Abre los Ojos*. In fact, Crowe claims that both he and Amenábar meant for the protagonist's real life to be dreamlike, so that for the lucid dream he buys “the real life”: significantly, then, he chooses not to blank out the “accident”, but to live with “the sweet and the sour” (*Vanilla Sky* DVD). But while no sustained visual distinction is drawn between epistemological realism on the one hand, and imaginative invention on the other, I would nonetheless say that the reality/dream dualism is not altogether undermined; rather it is the interplay inherent in the binary pair that fuels the narrative's structure and meaning.



Figures 7 and 8: Living the fantasy: Eduardo Noriega and Penélope Cruz in *Abre los Ojos*, Tom Cruise and Penélope Cruz in *Vanilla Sky*

3.5.2 Shifts in meaning

It may be that Amenábar and Crowe use the same set of dreams, and very often similar filmic techniques, to point to their protagonists' states of mind and to underline their shared dramatic question. Yet it seems that the two directors intend to convey somewhat differing messages to their audience, and the distinctions lie in subtle disparities in the dream content. I believe that there are three major areas of difference: firstly, David's relationship with his father is shown to be at the root of his psychological trauma, and hence informative of his dreams in a way that is not emphasised in those of César; secondly, David's dream life relies on iconic cultural references that are not present in the original; and thirdly, there is a philosophical difference inherent in the two films' endings.

The stylistic and narrative choices made by the two filmmakers – and the respective crews and actors – are central to communicating these salient differences. While it is the director's prerogative to interpret the narrative, this thesis is also interested in exploring how meaningful insights or intentional ambiguities can be cued in the screenplay. Interestingly, *Vanilla Sky* credits Cameron Crowe for the screenplay, while Amenábar and Mateo Gilm wrote the original screenplay of *Abre Los Ojos*. Hence the directors also engage with their respective interpretations of the story at the scripting stage. Where the writer and director are not the same person, it is arguably necessary for a scriptwriter to embed a clear cause-effect logic into the script in order to deter directors from interpreting ambiguous elements in

unintended ways. Deliberate ambiguity in the script is, it seems, a risky business.

In dissecting Amenábar and Crowe's respective messages, let us firstly consider the role of David's past relationship with his father, which is pivotal to *Vanilla Sky*. Whereas we learn very little about César's relationship with his family in *Abre los Ojos*, in Crowe's remake there are repeated references to a father-son conflict. According to Anne White, the introduction of the father-son dynamic suggests that Crowe sought to provide the audience with an explanation as to why David behaves the way he does: this may have been Crowe's attempt to fill in "potentially confusing gaps in the original text" (193). White sees the general rule as being that the Hollywood hypertext will "attempt to explain or clarify any areas of doubt or ambiguity or remove elements perceived to be unnecessarily complicating" (192). She points out that in narrative terms, this may mean providing motivation for the apparently inexplicable behaviour of characters, and may entail the tying up of any loose threads (192). Gary Johnson suggests that, when we find out that David's parents died in a traffic accident, "We feel for him because of his loss and immediately forgive him for being selfish and irresponsible". Johnson believes that because *Abre los Ojos* must win us over to its central character, we "invest more energy in the drama we're watching" (n.p.). Certainly, it seems that because we have no explanation for César's shallow and manipulative nature, *Abre los Ojos* is rendered darker and less explicable than *Vanilla Sky*.

Central to the portrayal of the father-child relationship in *Vanilla Sky* is Crowe's referencing of Robert Mulligan's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), which he discusses on his director's commentary on the *Vanilla Sky* DVD. Probably the reference passes most viewers by, but it is worth considering, given that it speaks so clearly of Crowe's intentions. A scene from the film appears on a large overhead screen in the opening nightmare sequence, in which David dreams he is in a deserted Times Square. The same scene is later seen playing on a television in the prison officer's room, where the psychologist McCabe

attempts to establish a motivation for David's crime.⁴⁴ Although *To Kill a Mockingbird* is most commonly remembered for tackling racial prejudice in the Deep South, White points out that another of its central themes is the father-child relationship (193). Towards the film's end, Edmund Ventura makes clear that David has drawn on his own deep-seated memory of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in order to create the McCabe character as the kind of ideal father he never had as a child. The professional, caring fatherly figure in the psychologist then is an ideal to which David aspires, as opposed to a wishful memory of his real life. By emphasising his poor relationship with his father as being the root of David's trauma, Crowe underwrites the idea that our unconscious is inextricably linked to our past. Also linking the unconscious to the past, Edmund Ventura tells David that his guilt over jilting Julie is the reason for her reappearance in his lucid dream. Amenábar simply does not speak in these same cause-and-effect terms in his portrayals of César's dream life: the effect is that César is not as overtly motivated as is David, nor is the narrative of *Abre los Ojos* as clear-cut as is that of *Vanilla Sky*.

Not only does Crowe emphasise the father-son relationship by quoting *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he also weaves into *Vanilla Sky* a number of references to other films and to familiar icons. Crowe claims that he had two main sources of inspiration for the Sofía character: one was Audrey Hepburn, and the other was a more generic figure that he refers to as "the French New Wave heroine" (*Vanilla Sky* DVD). There are a number of jump cuts and freeze frames in a love scene between David and Sofía during the lucid dream, which Crowe explains were inspired by French New Wave films such as Jean Luc Godard's *Breathless* (1960) and François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962) (*Vanilla Sky* DVD). These devices serve to emphasise the oneiric nature of the subject matter, and also to reference a cinematic period that had been important to David in his real life, and upon which he now draws to fuel his lucid dream.

Crowe claims that for him one of the biggest reasons to "cover" the film was to "celebrate the things that create us", which he sees as being largely the pop cultural images with which we grow up and which we make our own (*Vanilla*

⁴⁴ Crowe claims that the set of the prison where McCabe grills David is meant to be "the inside of a man's mind" and that this is where the "central conversation of the movie occurs" (*Vanilla Sky* DVD).

Sky DVD). There is evidently no such aim on Amenábar's part, and I would suggest that a preponderance of inter-textual references constitute the second major means by which Crowe's message differs from that of Amenábar. It seems that in his extensive referencing of cultural icons in David's dreams, Crowe is communicating a somewhat altered message to his audience – namely that we are constantly living other people's dreams, and that our identities and ideals are manufactured by the mass media. In fact, Crowe claims that one of the questions he wanted to ask through the film was "What is love in a world that is fuelled by pop culture?" and that the film is about "how pop culture invades our lives and our minds" and will "outlive you every time" (*Vanilla Sky* DVD).

Possibly these messages are not that clear to the viewer, who may simply accept the pop imagery as part of the film's texture or background. However, there is one scene where the pop iconography is foregrounded, and is inextricably linked with David's isolation. In the initial nightmare sequence of *Vanilla Sky*, David finds himself all alone on Times Square, inundated by the electronic screens and signboards: naked women, money, a sign for the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. (See Clip 12, Chapter 3 on DVD.) These icons are increasingly rapidly inter-cut with shots of David running in terror – to create a disorienting montage effect. Crowe says that every one of these signs is selling a solution to David's loneliness, offering a quick fix for what he needs in life (*Vanilla Sky* DVD).



Figures 9 and 10: The opening nightmare sequence in *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*

There is not the same preponderance of signs or icons in the opening scenes of *Abre los Ojos*, which depend more on the defamiliarisation of the familiar to

achieve a nightmarish space (See *Clip 13, Chapter 3* on DVD.). Marina Martin suggests that in the opening scenes of *Abre los Ojos*, “the camera – enhanced by the appearance of background music – suddenly shifts the visualization of sequences presenting commonplace and familiar settings to the portrayal of a fantastic, or dreamlike space”. She points out that the streets in Madrid all look absolutely real and familiar, except for their complete emptiness and silence (n.p.). As Freud points out, there is also an element of the uncanny in the strange return of something once familiar (“The Uncanny” 368).

The nightmares at the beginning of *Vanilla Sky* and *Abre los Ojos* recall that at the beginning of *Wild Strawberries*, in which Borg similarly finds himself eerily alone in a city street. Just as Borg is confronted by condensed imagery in the handless clock and bleeding eye, which bespeak his seclusion, the electronic signboards on Washington Square contain images that speak to David’s isolation. Popular iconography thus underlines David’s dramatic question: *What stands in the way of finding true love?* The answer then encoded in this scene is that pop culture presents misconceptions of romantic love based on superficial images, surfaces, appearances, false and unattainable ideals and narratives.

There is a sense in which the barrage of cultural references lightens the tone of *Vanilla Sky*, in relation to the darker and more brooding tone of *Abre los Ojos*. The constant referencing of music such as Radiohead in *Vanilla Sky* contributes to a mood that, if not exactly light, is certainly removed from the sombre orchestral score in *Abre los Ojos*. Yet there is one particular use of a song in *Vanilla Sky* that has an especially disturbing effect in that it works by counterpoint. Towards the film’s end, when David realises he is stuck in a nightmare, and is yelling to get out, the soundtrack plays the Beach Boys’ *Good Vibrations*. In its gaiety, this pop song is starkly disconcerting and actually serves to increase the sense of David’s desperate turmoil.

It is worth noting that in *Vanilla Sky* “high culture” is equally as important as pop culture, given the title of the film and the references to Monet’s Impressionist painting, and the social class of the protagonist. Possibly it is ideology and dominant ideological values communicated through cultural

texts (high culture *and* pop culture) that are important, not just mass culture and media texts.

3.5.3 Virtual reality or lucid dream

So far I have argued for two differences inherent in the directors' messages. Firstly Crowe, unlike Amenábar, emphasises cause-effect psychological relationships. Secondly, Crowe quotes cultural icons to suggest that our dreams are strongly formulated by accepted ideologies. Now I come to a third, and more weighty difference, in the messages the two directors seem to convey.

Anne White points out that one of the basic premises of Crowe's remake is that David's experience for much of the film is retrospectively explained to be a "lucid dream": "a personal reality constructed from his own memories of a popular culture which he experiences while held in cryogenic suspended animation" (192). This "personal reality" represents a telling divergence from Amenábar's original, in which César experiences a "virtual reality" – partly controlled by others – rather than a lucid dream entirely of his own creation. The Life Extension technicians of *Abre los Ojos* populate César's virtual world with custom-designed characters who they claim are programmed to react in certain ways. The technicians have deemed the psychiatrist as necessary to César's development, and when César questions why the psychiatrist is still present near the film's end, the reply is that his removal after he has saved César's life would have been "virtually incorrect".⁴⁵

By way of contrast, in *Vanilla Sky*, every single element of David's lucid dream is shown to be a product of his unconscious. The psychiatrist is not someone whom Life Extension has deemed necessary, but a character that David has dreamed up in lieu of a father figure. The degree of control that

⁴⁵ Certainly "virtual reality" is the term used in *Abre los Ojos* to describe César's experience, and this indeed is my reading of the film. However in *Filmhistoria*, Martin argues that the end of *Abre los Ojos* discloses a disturbing and ironic revelation: that the characters in the story have turned into a dream. She draws a comparison with Borges' "Las ruinas circulares", in that Antonio, César's psychiatrist, refuses to accept his fate: "For him, the painful realization that his world is a delusion, someone else's mental representations – and, most importantly, that his own existence is nothing outside César's mind, his creator – is unacceptable" (n.p.).

David commands is thus of a higher order: he alone creates his environment, drawing partly on cultural icons. However, in César's case, the workers at Life Extension know his thoughts "a second after he has them", and possess the power to influence his experience. This disparity points to a key attitudinal difference between the two directors: Amenábar is talking about manipulation of the mind by others – an altogether more disturbing notion than Crowe's concept of self-delusion on the part of the dreamer.

In a paper on cinematic postmodernism in *American Drama*, Barbara Simerka and Christopher Weimer write that the final scenes of *Abre los Ojos* and *Vanilla Sky* raise post-modern confusions: for the psychiatrist and the Life Extension representatives offer conflicting solutions to César and David's problems (n.p.). Simerka and Weimar point out that whereas new technology will allow the protagonists to wake up and live again in the 22nd Century, the catch is that they can awaken only by "committing suicide" in their dream lives, jumping from skyscrapers – a quandary which the two films resolve in very different ways (n.p.). Certainly, in *Abre los Ojos*, César is confronted only with the following simple choice: to believe the claim of the Life Extension representative that he is currently living a virtual reality that he can end by committing virtual suicide, or to believe Antonio's warning that he would actually be ending his existence once and for all. Unable to verify either option, César opts for a quite literal "leap of faith" from the rooftop: "he chooses to risk sacrificing the nightmarish life he currently must endure in the hope that he will awaken to a new and better one" (Simerka and Weimer n.p.). By way of contrast, the Life Extension technician in *Vanilla Sky* challenges McCabe's very existence, demanding that he name his two daughters to whom he routinely refers. McCabe's inability to do so removes all doubt – confirming that he is a creation of David's lucid dreams. So when David leaps from the rooftop, he does so secure in the belief that he will reawaken in the real world of the future.



Figures 11 and 12: Leap of faith in *Abre los Ojos*; certain leap to the future in *Vanilla Sky*

Simerka and Weimar see *Vanilla Sky* then as taming Amenábar's deliberate ambiguity, by "presenting itself as ultimately belonging to a single genre, science fiction, and by giving the viewer a stronger sense of certainty and closure" (n.p.). Cynthia Fuchs reiterates the difference: "Where the first movie leaves open questions as to how, why, and even if César is caught up in a bizarre nightmare-scape, *Vanilla Sky* makes everything make sense, eventually" (n.p.).

3.6 Conclusion

The dreams in *Wild Strawberries* convey Borg's isolation, and move towards showing his self-realisation. In so doing, the dreams underscore the film's central dramatic question: *Can Borg escape from his closed world?* *Wild Strawberries* functions not only as a kind of "personal therapy" for Bergman via Borg, but also communicates through dreams what he seems to want to say in a broader sense: that we need to look deep within to acknowledge who we are, and to recognise how the past informs our present.

The dream sequences in *Perfect Blue*, which can also be read in terms of fantasy, bespeak Mima's inner experience of confusion and paranoia. The dreams, together with the *doppelgänger* and the use of reflective imagery, posit over and over Mima's crucial dramatic question: *Will she find her real identity?* In this way, Kon uses dream and fantasy imagery to convey the necessity of finding oneself, and one's place in the world, through struggle and exploration.

Vanilla Sky emulates the use of dreams in *Abre los Ojos* in underlining the protagonist's state of mind and the pivotal dramatic question: *What stands in the way of his finding true love?* However, because the dreams in the two films are so close in their execution, small disparities indicate diverging messages. Crowe, unlike Amenábar, emphasises cause-effect psychological relationships, and references cultural icons to imply that our dreams are formulated by society. Furthermore, the disjunction between dream as "virtual reality" in *Abre los Ojos* and as "lucid dream" in *Vanilla Sky*, points to a fundamental difference in directorial vision. The message is a lurid one of external manipulation in *Abre los Ojos*. *Vanilla Sky* is somewhat lighter in tone in implying the possibility for self-control, and the creation of one's own narrative and iconography – albeit through the lifelong absorption of entrenched ideologies.

The dissection of cinematic dreams that are neither hackneyed nor obscuring, but instead are richly layered and illuminating, challenges the common wisdom of screenwriting guides, which counsel filmmakers to use dreams at their peril. Instead, screened dreams should necessarily contribute to the narrative. In so doing, cinematic dreams can allow filmmakers powerful means by which to reflect a character's psychology, to throw light on the dramatic question motivating the character, and ultimately, to communicate what they as filmmakers are trying to say.

3.7 Implications for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*

Zinzi and the Boondogle includes elements that could be attributed to Zinzi's imagination, and that represent her inner journey – but by no means does the story revolve around dream to the extent that *Wild Strawberries*, *Perfect Blue* or *Abre los Ojos* do. Nevertheless, the screenplay does contain one crucial dream sequence, which describes the moment when Zinzi conjures up the Boondogle – as a projection of her fear. Furthermore, the fantastical Bead World sequence functions on a level related to dream, although it is by no means its equivalent.

3.7.1 The creation dream

Zinzi “dreams up” the Boondogle on the fateful night after her mother’s funeral, a few hours after she has struck a deal with her landlady to bead badges in lieu of rent – an impossible one hundred badges by morning. She is just starting her fifth badge when her heavy eyes shut for an instant. Her hands keep on beading, and the viewer is no longer sure if she is awake or dreaming. The viewer shares Zinzi’s vision of herself and her three younger siblings huddled on the pavement – hungry, cold and thin. All of a sudden, beads bucket down from the sky. Zinzi’s baby sister Leila starts to cry, and Zinzi covers her face protectively. The road has become a rushing river of beads, and a dolphin swims towards the children, diving in and out of the swirling beads. As it breaks the surface once more, the dolphin changes into a baboon, which springs onto the pavement, and rushes – barking – towards them. Just as the baboon reaches the cowering children, it changes into an eagle, which takes off on great, outspread wings. The bead river rises up and washes Leila away. Zinzi leaps up after her and wakes with a jolt – tears in her eyes.

Zinzi sees that while she was dreaming she has confused the three bead badge designs to make a mixed-up creature – a cross between a baboon, a dolphin and an eagle. Frustrated tears well up in her eyes, and a teardrop escapes to roll down her cheek and land on the muddled badge in her hand. She nearly drops the badge in fright, for through her teardrop the beads seem to swell up and move around. She rubs her eyes furiously, wondering if she is dreaming once more. All at once, the mixed-up creature steps out of the badge – right onto her hand.

It is useful to apply to this dream sequence the three questions posed in the chapter as a whole. Firstly, how does the dream convey Zinzi’s state of mind? Secondly, how does it underline Zinzi’s central dramatic question? Thirdly, how would the dream convey what the filmmaker intended to say?

Firstly, the dream is intended to convey Zinzi’s acute distress, centring on her fear of not being able to take adequate care of her family. Her envisioning her

siblings sitting on the pavement is a projection of her fear of failure. Leila being swept away by the bead river represents Zinzi's very worst fear - that of losing her siblings - and it also serves as a premonition for what is to come when the Boondogle kidnaps her little sister.

Secondly, the dream underlines the film's central dramatic question: *Will Zinzi overcome her debilitating fear?* Zinzi's dream articulates her terror, and through the dream she brings the Boondogle - her fear incarnate - to life. Zinzi's dramatic question is finally answered during the film's climax, when she destroys the badge created during her nightmare, symbolically conquering her terror - after having effectively confronted various fears throughout the story. Yet the Boondogle not only represents Zinzi's fear but also her desire: for she no doubt wishes for a powerful, magical fairy-godmother figure to wave a magic wand and provide much needed help in the insurmountable tasks she faces. Freud considers every dream to be the articulation of a wish in disguise (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 34-44). It is this complexity that makes the Boondogle a kind of double for Zinzi herself, and confronting him is a way of coming to terms with *her own* power, and with *her own* dark side.

Thirdly, the dream needs to convey a message pivotal to the film as a whole: that we are, to some extent, in charge of our destinies. It is crucial to the film's meaning that the Boondogle does not appear arbitrarily out of the ether, but that he is seen to be the product of Zinzi's powerful imagination. For this reason, there needs to be precise inter-cutting between Zinzi's dream images and her hands - working in autopilot: for the dream thoughts are made quite literally manifest.

Zinzi's awakening from her dream is unmistakable in her sudden jolt. Her drowsing off again needs to be just as clearly communicated to the audience by the closing of her eyelids and the drooping of her head. In *Screen Language: From Film Writing to Film-Making*, Potter points out that new filmmakers often feel that simple solutions like showing a character wake up are too obvious or clichéd (32). She asserts that while it is important to be subtle when the material demands it, it is also important to know when to be

direct (32). It seems that for its target audience, the dream scene in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is quite complex enough, and that clarity in its direction will be critical.

Zinzi's dream, in containing an allegory of sorts, keeps with the cinematic tradition whereby oneiric sequences are suffused with figurative meanings. In its unabashed symbolic language, it is my hope that Zinzi's dream will reflect the Freudian notion of condensation, containing multiple connotations within one image. Whereas such devices are unlikely to be apparent to children on a conscious level, they should create a sense of depth and mystery. In discussing *Wild Strawberries*, I considered a number of recurrent motifs that condensed multiple meanings into one image. It is my hope that the element of rain in the dream sequence will similarly serve as a condensing motif. In her dream, countless beads pour down on Zinzi and her siblings. On a literal level, the beads echo the actual rain pounding down on the tin roof. The landlady has earlier commented on it with an incredulous "Rain in summer! Something odd in the air, I can feel it." The unseasonable rain suggests that something peculiar is afoot – so prefiguring the Boondogle's arrival. In echoing the actual rain, the bucketing beads underline Zinzi's terror as to what would happen if they were to be evicted from their home and exposed to the elements. The fact that the rain consists of beads should furthermore stress the task Zinzi has to complete to avoid the eviction: a task that – like the bead river in the dream – threatens to drown her. The dream culminates in the bead river washing Leila away, so foreshadowing Leila's abduction into the fantastical Bead World, where everything from buildings to people is made of beads. Thus the bead rain is intended to condense a number of inter-related meanings in a way characteristic of dream motifs.

In fact, the trope of falling beads will be used to animate the transportation of the children from the Real- to the Bead World at the start of Act Three. Just as Kon tailors *anime* techniques to express Mima's mental state, it is my intention to exploit animation's potential to convey interiority. Thus Zinzi's inner trance-like state, as she moves through a liminal zone between realms, is visually portrayed by the morphing patterns in her mind's eye.

3.7.2 The dreamy realm of beads

The Bead World, into which the children venture, functions similarly – although not identically – to cinematic dreams. It seems worthwhile to pose once again the three questions that structure the chapter.

Firstly, the Bead World is not so much representative of Zinzi's state of mind as it is a projection of her fantasy of being free from responsibility. But it is a dangerous fantasy. For Zinzi's succumbing to the Bead World's attractions would mean her failing in her overall task – of overcoming her fear and keeping her family together.

Secondly, Zinzi's sojourn in the Bead World serves to underline her dramatic question: *Will she be able to overcome her fear?* This metaphorically entails facing up to the Boondogle. To do so, Zinzi has to escape his magical realm – that is face reality – before confronting and overpowering the Boondogle.

Thirdly, the depiction of the enchanting yet treacherous Bead World should communicate an essential message about superficial pleasures. After falling under the spell of the Bead World, Zinzi's siblings slip into solo activities that are addictively preoccupying – yet deeply dissatisfying. Sam spins incessantly on the merry-go-round, while Vuyo does endless somersaults on the top rung of the jungle gym. What is more, the fact that Vuyo and Sam forget their mission to save Leila, reveals the Bead World as a soulless, lonely place. It requires Zinzi's evocation of their late mother and their home to snap the boys – and indeed the enchanted Leila – out of their dazed states.

The children's enchantment in the Bead World has its precedent in a number of myths and fairytales. In *From the Beast to the Blonde: on fairy tales and their tellers*, Marina Warner discusses legends from *The Odyssey* to *Grotta della Sibilla* – whereby characters are seduced into spellbinding realms, which gradually reveal their dark sides (3-11). The ice creams that aid the seduction

of Zinzi's siblings in the Bead World also echo the "earthly delights" that Warner identifies as one aspect of these ostensible paradises (11).⁴⁶

In seeking ways to represent the Bead World in visual terms it is worth reflecting on the techniques for screening dreams discussed in this chapter. The Bead World sequence should have a distinct visual treatment, as in the switch to colour in *The Wizard of Oz*, the altered skylines in *Vanilla Sky* and the harsh lighting in *Wild Strawberries'* opening nightmare. The Bead World aesthetic should be disconcertingly garish, to allude to the realm's inherent danger. Colours should be off-kilter: the sky turquoise, the trees lime green, and the sun a dangerous blood red. For when the sun sets, the children's fate will be sealed. But while the Bead World is a distinct realm, it should still mirror the ordinary Cape Town in structural terms, and feature similar landmarks – such as a beaded Table Mountain – to create a sense of uncanny repetition.

The Bead World is patently not a dream: its events are far too logically constructed for that. But as a sequence of projected fantasy, its function is comparable to that of dreams – as it underlines Zinzi's state of mind, foregrounds her dramatic question, and allows for symbolic communication on the part of the filmmakers.

3.7.3 A fusion monster

The Boondogle who rises up out of the beads could be viewed as a displacement, in representing Zinzi's fear in symbolic terms. At the same time, the Boondogle can be viewed as a condensation in himself – a fusion

⁴⁶ For one, the consumption of food represents a submission to temptation in *The Odyssey*, when Odysseus and his men feast in the cave of the Cyclops and are subsequently trapped there by Polyphemus. Persephone is also trapped in the underworld because she succumbs to temptation and eats a pomegranate seed. It is not my intention to mark the consumption of food as negative – Zinzi's siblings are clearly ravenous – but to articulate the power that the Bead World holds in offering easy rewards. Consumption of tempting food clearly has precedents as far back as the Adam and Eve myth, but perhaps the closest precedent for the ice creams is the Turkish Delight in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the consumption of which makes Edmund forget his familial allegiance in favour of the White Witch. Similarly, the ice creams make Zinzi's brothers forget their mission to save their baby sister.

monster. He is a creature born of Zinzi's nightmare, and as such, it is useful to draw on Noël Carroll's discussion about the composition of fantastic beings in "Nightmare and the Horror Film". As I discussed in relation to the creation of Mima's double in *Perfect Blue*, Carroll identifies two means of creating nightmare creatures: fusion and fission ("Nightmare" 166). Whereas Mima's *doppelgänger* fits into the latter category of fission, the Boondogle clearly represents a fusion, entailing the "construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions" ("Nightmare" 166). The Boondogle crosses the distinctions between baboon, dolphin and eagle, and in so doing, combines the qualities associated with these creatures: guile for the baboon, swiftness for the dolphin and fierceness for the eagle – associations both positive and negative. According to Carroll, "The fusion of conflicting tendencies in the figure of the monster in horror films has the dream process of condensation as its approximate psychic prototype" ("Nightmare" 165).

The fusion of conflicting qualities is crucial in ensuring that the Boondogle is not merely repulsive. Instead he should carry a certain appeal to make him a more engaging antagonist: for Zinzi's relationship to him is curiously ambivalent – as is that of the audience. Zinzi patently needs the Boondogle's help and so has to court him; but she fears his mischief, which turns to outright malevolence. Indubitably, though, the Boondogle's presence in her life ultimately benefits Zinzi: in order to stand up to his strength, she has to become stronger in herself. The antagonist is necessary for her growth. As Bruno Bettelheim puts it in relation to fairy tales, "internal processes are externalised and become comprehensible as represented by the figures of the story and its events" (25).

Similarly, *Zinzi and the Boondogle* aims to communicate Zinzi's inner journey through an outer one. To overcome her debilitating fear, she has to struggle with the fantasy monster that she "dreams up". Notwithstanding the fact that the Boondogle is in no way confined to Zinzi's dreams, his presence remains ambivalent. One sequence that captures this ambivalence occurs when Zinzi is at an especially low-point: the Boondogle has visited for the second time and she has a creeping awareness of his capacity for harm. Zinzi brushes her teeth, staring in dismay at her dishevelled, exhausted self in the tarnished

bathroom mirror, when suddenly alongside her reflection appears that of the Boondogle. Zinzi turns quickly to face him, but he is not there; when she looks back into the mirror, his reflection again leers at her. She swings away from the mirror once more – furious at his games. But the Boondogle is nowhere to be seen. She is quite alone.

The mirror is used to portray the Boondogle as a projection of Zinzi's fear, at a moment when she is deeply afraid. This brings to mind the first arrival of Mima's *doppelgänger* in *Perfect Blue* – as a reflection in the train window after a fraught first day on set. Mima is beset by self-doubt, panicking that she is seeing things. We, like Zinzi, are unsure whether or not she is imagining the Boondogle's presence – just as we are unsure whether or not Mima's double is real.

Indeed, it is my hope that the Boondogle will escape easy labelling as real or unreal. It ought to be possible for a viewer to read him as a psychological projection, or alternatively as an independent creature that really exists. For in a sense he straddles these two categories: he is created within Zinzi's dream, yet he is nonetheless visible to the other characters. The Boondogle is eerily present, fleshy and real on the one hand, yet frustratingly elusive on the other – much like our dreams, perhaps?

CHAPTER 4

Animating Shifts in Consciousness: Animation and Live Action in the Feature Films of Jan Švankmajer

4.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the crossing over between live action and animation, focusing on the work of Czech filmmaker Jan Švankmajer. Building on existing film theory and on the analysis of Švankmajer's films, I will argue that animation can function to express the metaphysical and to transform reality. By extension, where animation is combined with live action, the animation affects and transforms the reality of the live action – by making visible the unconscious aspects of interiority. Like Surrealism, animation upsets the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious. The blending of live action filmmaking with animation bespeaks the inter-penetration of the conscious and unconscious realms.

Švankmajer's *oeuvre* includes 26 short films and four feature films. For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on two of his features, namely *Alice* (1987) and *Faust* (1994), but will also briefly discuss his other features, *The Conspirators of Pleasure* (1996) and *Little Otik* (2001), and make occasional references to his short films. I will also draw parallels and make contrasts with films mixing live action and animation that have come out of Hollywood in recent years. This chapter will refer particularly to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988: dir. Robert Zemeckis)⁴⁷ because of its influence on the entire genre of live action/animation mixes. I also refer to *Monkeybone* (2001: dir.

⁴⁷ Zemeckis has directed a number of comedies about ordinary individuals who step into another dimension, including *Back to the Future* (1985), and *Romancing the Stone* (1989) (Maslin 2). *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* was his first feature to mix live action and animation.

Henry Sellick),⁴⁸ as it involves extensive trafficking between a live action and an animated world, and a corresponding movement between the conscious and unconscious realms that this chapter aims to explore.

Švankmajer's films combine various forms of animation with live action to produce an overall collage effect. His animation itself explores a wide range of forms, from traditional cell animation, to the stop-motion animation⁴⁹ of puppets and marionettes, to three-dimensional clay modelling, and pixilation.⁵⁰

Alice follows Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to some degree, with imaginative recreations of sequences such as Alice's growing and shrinking. The film also contains new sequences, for instance where Alice is trapped inside a doll-like shell. Finally, she appears on trial before the King and Queen of Hearts – before waking up back in the "real world". A live-action Alice interacts with animated puppets, such as the stuffed White Rabbit, the wind-up March Hare and the Caterpillar made of a sock. And when Alice shrinks, she herself is transformed into a doll, which is animated via stop-motion.



Figures 13 and 14: Live action Alice and her doll double

Faust is a free adaptation of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Goethe's *Faust* and traditional folk treatments of the legend of the man who sold his soul to the

⁴⁸ Sellick's previous two features were the highly acclaimed *Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), a purely stop-motion animation film, and *James and the Giant Peach* (1996), based on Roald Dahl's novel – and combining live action and stop-motion animation.

⁴⁹ Stop-motion animation constitutes the frame-by-frame manipulation and photographing of static and three-dimensional objects, to create the illusion of movement. Three dimensional clay modelling, or claymation, is a variation on the technique.

⁵⁰ Pixillation is "the frame by frame recording of deliberately staged live-action movement to create the illusion of movement impossible to achieve by naturalistic means" (Wells, "Animation: forms and meanings" 224).

devil.⁵¹ Švankmajer's Faust is a nondescript man who is handed a map on exiting a Prague subway station. Lured into a theatre, he finds a copy of Goethe's *Faust*, begins to read aloud, and summons up a devil who offers him everything his heart desires in return for his soul. The film blends live actors with stop-motion, claymation and life-sized marionettes. As in *Alice*, Faust himself becomes a puppet at times, and is also animated via pixilation.



Figure 15 and 16: Devil marionettes, Mephistopheles in claymation in *Faust*

4.2 Live Action versus animation

Although one way of thinking about animation is in relation to live action media, Maureen Furniss argues that there is an immense area in which the two tendencies overlap, especially within the realm of aesthetics (5). She suggests that rather than thinking of the two modes of production as existing in separate spheres, one should view them on a continuum representing all possible image types, under the broad category of "motion picture production" (5). Alan Cholodenko evokes Derrida and deconstruction to argue further that it is, in fact, impossible to keep the terms "live action" and "cartoon animation" separate. The two meanings of animation, he suggests, are helpful here: the first is "to impart motion to" and the second is "to bring to life" (215). Cholodenko sees it as ironic, then, that the term "live action" is given to a mode seeking to separate itself from animation (215).

⁵¹ Švankmajer identifies the following elements as having influenced his version of *Faust*: the live theatre of Goethe, Marlowe and Grabbe; the "low-brow" genre of folk puppet theatre; medieval ritual; Gounod's opera and also everyday contemporary reality (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 114).

Švankmajer's films constitute a hybrid genre that upsets neat distinctions between live action and animation, reality and abstraction. Peta Allen Shera's article, "The Labyrinthine Madness of Švankmajer's *Faust*", is particularly useful in terms of my analysis, in that she particularly explores the relationship of live action and animation, and discusses the film in terms of the uncanny. She points out that although there is no privileging of one medium over another in Švankmajer's films, animation nonetheless "occupies an othered position in relation to live action" (25). I suggest that this "othering" process is an integral means by which Švankmajer conveys different levels of experience. However, this is not to say that live action and animation exist in a hierarchy, or that one medium is always used to represent reality and the other the imagination. On the contrary, in an interview conducted by Wendy Jackson, Švankmajer resists defining which medium should be employed to express a particular idea, insisting instead that he makes his work "to order", by which he means an "inner order" (9). Rather than live action or animation always signalling a particular mental state, the shifts between the media suggest a constant fluctuation between levels of experience – the conscious and unconscious.

The transitions between live action and animation usually have more precise implications in mainstream films.⁵² I interviewed David Russell, storyboard artist on a number of films that combine live action and animation, and a production illustrator on *Roger Rabbit*. Russell's experience is that the decision to use live action and animation together is usually driven by the screenplay – and the need for a human or animal character to switch worlds (personal interview, 21 November 2004).⁵³ For example, *Roger Rabbit* and *Monkeybone* are both based on the premise that there exists a separate world where imaginary characters reside.⁵⁴ In *Roger Rabbit* these are cartoon

⁵² In considering films which combine live action and animation, I do not include films which – although rooted in a real-world setting – employ some digital effects; or computer animation techniques, which Maureen Furniss points out is the case for the vast majority of Hollywood films (177).

⁵³ There are also films that use animation to show altered states of mind, rather than a switching of worlds. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998: dir. Terry Gilliam) describes a weekend of non-stop tripping on various hallucinogens. The film contains a number of animated special effects, such as the bats reflected in Hunter S. Thomson's dark glasses.

⁵⁴ *Cool World* (1992: dir. Ralph Bakshi) is another live action/animated film based on the same premise. As in *Monkeybone*, the protagonist travels to a Toon world that represents his own psyche. The mix of live action and animation is clumsy, and the plot is unsuccessful: the film

characters, created through traditional cell animation, who commute into the human world to work on cartoon shows.



Figures 17 and 18: Live action meets animation:

Rob Hoskins as Eddie Valiant with Jessica Rabbit, and with Roger Rabbit

The creatures of *Monkeybone* are nightmare figures, represented by humans wearing costumes, and manipulated via Computer Graphic Imagery (CGI) – although *Monkeybone* himself is a 3-D model animated through stop-motion. The human protagonists of both films travel from the real world to these other worlds, trafficking back and forth between what are essentially discrete realms.



Figures 19 and 20: Brendan Fraser as Stu Miley, with 3-D modelled *Monkeybone*, and with dressed-up human figures in the underworld of *Down Town*

Rather than demarcating distinct worlds, live action and animation often merge in Švankmajer's films. However, the joins are by no means always smooth, so that the effect is often more of a collage than a synthesis. This contrasts with mainstream live action/animation hybrids, where every effort is made to seamlessly join the media. Russell stresses the need for "smooth continuity between all the filmic elements, or else the transition will be too

was a commercial and critical failure. It is often referred to in relation to *Monkeybone* though, because of the proximity of the thematic material.

abrupt" (personal interview, 21 November 2004).⁵⁵ On the contrary, in Švankmajer's work, an animated element might suddenly appear within an otherwise banal live action setting, such as when Faust looks up at a window in an ordinary street and suddenly – in a fleeting moment of stop-motion animation – a row of apples rot to maggot-infested mush before his eyes. (See *Clip 1, Chapter 4* on DVD.) We have not travelled into another realm; rather a moment of animation has been used to move swiftly into Faust's unconscious, and to express his foreboding at mortality. The abrupt nature of Švankmajer's shifts between live action and animation, I suggest, articulates the way in which our unconscious can disturb and impinge on everyday reality.

Paul Wells describes the way in which Švankmajer makes consciousness tangible, suggesting that Švankmajer is

...creating a fictionalised notion of consciousness, which, if imagined 'real', both recalls the playful and liberal apparatus of childhood and makes concrete the irony and contradiction of the adult sensibility. ("Body consciousness" 15)

In constructing this fictionalised notion of consciousness, and manifesting the contradictions of our adult psyches, Švankmajer treats live action and animation as filmic forms that carry equivalent value – if not equivalent meanings.

Wells believes that the process in animation of "giving life" to the inanimate should reveal something about the figure or object that could not effectively be achieved via live action. He suggests that if it is live action's job to present reality, animation is concerned with metaphysical reality – an alternative reality by which alternative perspectives are possible ("Forms and meanings" 214). It seems to follow that, where animation is combined with live action,

⁵⁵ There is particularly seamless joining in the presentation of the Hippogriff in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004: dir. Alfonso Cuarón). The Hippogrif is a highly realistic computer-generated magical creature that blends unnoticeably with its live action surrounds – suggesting that the magical creature is part and parcel of the live action surrounds.

the animation by extension affects and transforms the reality of the live action, investing it with alternative perspectives.

In keeping with its capacity for transformation, Švankmajer sees the animation in *Faust* as encapsulating the concepts of Surrealism (11). She argues that every animated sequence “enacts the subversion of the ordinary” – which is precisely the Surrealist agenda (13). Certainly, Švankmajer employs animation, along with puppetry, to draw his viewers into the interior world of the characters, into their innermost fears and desires. According to Wells, animation can interrogate previous representations of “reality” and reinterpret how “reality” might be understood (“Forms and meanings” 214). This interrogation of veracity is pivotal to Švankmajer’s work, and is rooted in his long-standing commitment to Surrealism, and its subversion of the ordinary.

4.3 The Surrealist impulse

Švankmajer is a self-professed “militant Surrealist”, and having joined the Prague-based Surrealist group in 1970 he still belongs to it to this day. Up until his wife Eva Švankmajerová died in 2006, he co-owned the *Gambra-Surrealistická Galerie* in Prague with her. Indeed, Švankmajerová was a long-standing collaborator on his films.

In a documentary entitled *The Animator of Prague* (1980: dir. James Marsh), Švankmajer claims: “I consider all my films to be political – some more than others.” In the same documentary, Michael O’Pray discusses the sustained political impetus of Surrealism in Eastern Europe, as opposed to the West, where it “collapsed into advertising and mainstream cinema and didn’t retain any force after the 1920s and 30s”.⁵⁶ Švankmajer’s commitment to Surrealism

⁵⁶ Furthermore, in “A Mannerist Surrealist”, O’Pray writes that Czech Surrealism’s critical and subversive role was a response to the crushing of the Dubček government in 1968, after which there was a silencing of “difficult” voices in Czechoslovakia (48). Švankmajer was forced to “rest from the cinema” for seven years because of unauthorised post-production changes to *Leonardo’s Diary*, 1972, which referred to the sombre reality of Czech life after 1968 (“A Mannerist Surrealist” 48).

has thus been inextricably linked to an oppressive political climate and his anti-totalitarian stance.

In consistently looking beyond rational bounds, Švankmajer works with the central facet of Surrealism as theorised in the 1930s by the movement's spokesman, André Breton, in the Surrealist Manifesto. Breton describes the movement as trying to address the true meaning of thought through "pure psychic automatism" (cited in Nadeau 96-7). Speaking of the role of the unconscious, Breton claims that a work "cannot be considered surrealist unless the artist strains to reach the total psychological scope of which consciousness is only a small part" (cited in Ades 129). Švankmajer's work indubitably encompasses a wide psychological scope, but he claims to prefer the term "non-conscious":

I actually prefer the term non-conscious. Whatever comes out of my subconscious I use it because I consider it to be the purest form, everything else in your conscious being has been influenced by reality, by education and by your upbringing but the original experiences that exist within you are the least corrupted of all experiences. (cited in Wood 1)

Švankmajer sees the "non-conscious" as his fount of inspiration, and pivotal to his Surrealist project. He feels that Surrealism is often superficially perceived in terms of aesthetics, and insists that Surrealism is rather "a psychology, about freedom, eroticism, the subconscious" (cited in Andrew 7).⁵⁷

J.H. Matthews speaks of certain natural advantages of cinema for conveying Surrealist thought: "free association, unexpected visual juxtapositions, and the ability to arrange concrete images in an order alien to that of spatial and temporal reality" (3).⁵⁸ Švankmajer's version of *Faust* has many of the

⁵⁷ Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to use the Freudian term "unconscious", rather than "subconscious" – a term that is not employed in Freud's writing. However, where I quote Švankmajer I will retain his term "non-conscious", which he, in fact, uses interchangeably with "subconscious".

⁵⁸ Early Surrealist filmmakers who availed themselves of these "advantages" were Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, who collaborated to make what is arguably the quintessential

hallmarks of Surrealism: familiar objects are rendered strange, unexpected elements are juxtaposed, and temporal and spatial realities are systematically negated. There is a merging of media and also of genres, and Švankmajer sees this alternation of styles as creating the effect of a "variety collage", which "brings the audience into the stream of a continual story or dream..." (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 114).⁵⁹

Švankmajer claims that if he were to compare the dream to something, it would be to childhood, and that "dreams are an extension of childhood" (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 106). Švankmajer describes both childhood and dreams as "the constants" in his work (*The Animator of Prague* DVD), and discusses his consequent choice of animation as a medium for his interpretation of *Alice*:

Animation can bring the imagery of childhood back to life and give it back its credibility... Children's games with imagery and infantile dreams gain an 'objectively' real dimension which freezes the patronising smile on the lips of all those who consider themselves too grown-up and wise, on the lips of all the clerks of life. ("Švankmajer on *Alice*" 2)

However, Geoff Andrew insists that Švankmajer's work is not in any way childish or even childlike; instead "he delves deep into the darkest recesses of his being, in order to uncover and portray complex, disturbing emotions and impulses that are, paradoxically, universal (2-3). O'Pray claims that Švankmajer's view of childhood comes out of Freud, whereby childhood is never viewed as innocent: rather one carries bad feelings into adulthood (*The Animator of Prague* DVD). Švankmajer claims that he is not interested in the imaginary world of the child as a "general category", that being an issue for

Surrealist film, *Un Chien Andalou* (1928). More recent filmmakers whose work has shown surreal tendencies have included David Lynch and David Cronenberg. Bordwell and Thompson write that Lynch's films such as *Eraserhead* and *Elephant Man* (1980) and *Blue Velvet* (1986) have pushed techniques such as ambiguous fantasy / flashback techniques towards expressionistic distortion (*Film History: An Introduction* 710). Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch* (1991), an adaptation of the William Burroughs novel, similarly employs surreal expressionistic elements.

⁵⁹ Dream is certainly one of the constants of Surrealism: Breton called dream and reality *vases communicants*, or communicating vessels (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 106).

psychologists; rather he is interested in a dialogue with his own childhood, which represents his alter ego ("Švankmajer on *Alice*" 1-2).⁶⁰

Giannalberto Bendazzi writes that Švankmajer's films "display devotion to a world suspended between reality and sleepwalking, between what exists autonomously and what is animated by fantasy" (364). Certainly the "autonomous" and the "fantastical" are frequently inverted. For Švankmajer commonly treats his human characters as objects:

I don't select my actors as to whether they are famous, or "good actors", rather I select actors who fit the vision I have for a particular picture. Then I work with them and I use the camera to photograph them as inanimate objects. Sometimes I even animate the actors, as I did in *Faust*.⁶¹ (cited in Wendy Jackson 1)

Conversely, Švankmajer consistently animates and anthropomorphises inanimate objects via stop-motion animation. These objects he shoots predominantly in close-up, to render them in sharp detail. He feels that the close-up "searches out every last scratch on the illusion", and claims to be attracted to "brute reality" rather than "representational illusionism" (cited in Král 1). In this way, Švankmajer consistently uses the innate properties of objects as the basis for the animated life he gives them. Alice's socks come to life as caterpillars, worming their way across the floor before burrowing down into it. Yet the caterpillars never lose the material quality of socks, and when one decides to go to sleep, it darns its eyes closed with needle and thread. The materiality of the sock becomes the basis for its animated life.

⁶⁰ In terms of psycho-social development, children are more in touch with the material of the unconscious since they have not yet fully developed rationality, nor have they fully experienced repression or socialisation. In Freudian psychoanalytic terms, the child is very close to the demands of the id, the primitive, unconscious basis of the psyche dominated by primary urges. These are later repressed and controlled by the ego, which controls conscious perceptions, and drives the demands of the id into the unconscious, to emerge as dreams and symptoms in adulthood. For a full discussion of this process, see Freud's *The Ego and the Id* (19-33).

⁶¹ By animating his characters, such as Mephistopheles, who shares the face of Faust himself, Švankmajer is using the method of pixilation. Furniss explains that whereas clay and puppet animators move inanimate objects incrementally before a camera and shoot them frame by frame, the pixilation animator shoots "live" objects – essentially people – frame by frame, a practice that closely borders on live action, although it falls within the realm of animation (8).

Švankmajer has spoken consistently of the power of things, claiming that rather than animating objects, he finds the life hidden within: “I coerce their inner life out of them – and for that animation is a great aid that I consider to be a sort of magical rite or ritual” (cited in Cherry 1).



Figure 21: The sock caterpillar's eye in *Alice*

Švankmajer places in the nursery a number of other objects that become animated during Alice's explorations. In a glass cage is a taxidermist's White Rabbit who later leads Alice through into the other realm. Once there, the collection of skeleton's heads will accost her, a mouse caught in a trap on the nursery floor will set fire to her hair, and the half-drunk cup of tea will reappear in the hands of the Mad Hatter. Thus Philip Strick argues that the familiar childish clutter becomes the unfamiliar, uncanny space of the child's mind (319).



Figures 22 and 23: The white rabbit and skeletons from the nursery reappear in the other realm in *Alice*

Shera sees the notion of the uncanny as closely linked to that of Surrealism, given that the uncanny is “the psychological state in which the subject confuses animate and inanimate and has a frightening sense of unfamiliarity when confronted with material that is otherwise familiar” (5).

4.4 The Uncanny

Not least because of its proximity to Surrealism, the uncanny, discussed in Chapter 3, is a useful concept in relation to aspects of Švankmajer's work. The uncanny – in which familiar objects or events reference unconscious material and seem suddenly and frighteningly strange – is particularly useful in revealing how shifts in consciousness translate to the screen, and how "inner" material is externalised in Švankmajer's films via animation. In the sections that follow I discuss ways through which Švankmajer's work evokes the uncanny: the omnipotence of thoughts; dismemberment; repetition; the double, and the effacement of the line between reality and imagination. I also question whether Švankmajer's work is possibly more evocative of the grotesque than of the uncanny.

4.4.1 Omnipotence of thoughts

Freud sees the projection of mental properties onto the world and its objects as one aspect of the uncanny, referring to the principle as the "omnipotence of thoughts" (362-3). Certainly, the uncanny is related to the child's primitive belief in the power of wishes to animate objects. This residual animism is a central feature of Švankmajer's ongoing project, as he himself has expressed:

To my eyes, objects have always been livelier than human beings. More static but also more telling. More moving because of their concealed meanings and their memory, which beats human memory.... In my films I have always tried to extract content from the objects. To listen to and to put their stories into images. (cited in Furniss 171)

Švankmajer's passion for objects frequently translates into a systematic dissection – as objects fall apart and decay, or reassemble themselves. In *Faust*, the head of Mephistopheles collapses into three lumps of bubbling clay, two with a single eye peering out and one with chattering teeth. The lumps

of clay burrow into the roots of a tree – only to reconfigure themselves later into the head of Mephistopheles. (See *Clip 2, Chapter 4* on DVD.)

4.4.2 Dismemberment

The preoccupation with disintegration evokes another aspect of Freud's theory of the uncanny, namely that concerning fragmented body parts. Freud perceives "dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist" and "feet which dance by themselves" as having "something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when they prove capable of independent activity" ("The Uncanny" 366). In *Faust*, there is fragmentation in that only the puppeteer's manipulating hands are visible, and in the hands beating drumsticks that appear out of a crack in the earth: the uncanny effect lies in both cases in the separation from the whole. More ominously, there is the old man who carries round a severed human leg – prefiguring the dismemberment of Faust's own leg when he dies at the mercy of Mephistopheles' car. Shera points out that in Marlowe's version of the story, Faust ends in fragments – "his limbs torn apart by devils" – and suggests that in Švankmajer's film, animation deliberately exaggerates the fragmentation inherent within the original narrative (13). Shera even suggests that animation, as fragments of another world, or of another spatial-temporal realm, "uncannily prefigures Faustus' ultimate end" (13).

4.4.3 Repetition

Another aspect of Švankmajer's work is that of repetition, uncanny because of the strange return of the familiar, and described by Freud as "fateful and inescapable" (360). *Alice* is rife with recurring motifs, and a number of actions and scenes are re-enacted. The film opens with Alice, sitting beside her nanny, throwing pebbles into the river, and the scene is immediately recreated – to uncanny effect – with dolls in the playroom. In this way, uncanny repetition is linked in Švankmajer's work to foreshadowing. At the scene's conclusion there is a fleeting moment as Alice runs from the

floorboards of her nursery directly onto the bare ground, trampling a miniature doll version of herself into the earth en route: the cut is so brief as to be almost subliminal. This repeated doll motif prepares the way for the transformation of the live-action Alice into a doll herself.

Interestingly, Russell claims that filmmakers working with the hybrid mix usually seek to introduce aspects of the impending animated world early within the live action context (personal interview, 21 November 2004). Either aesthetic elements of the animation are introduced early into the live action, or the human protagonist spends time with a creature from the animated realm before later being transported there with that creature. Both kinds of foreshadowing prepare the audience for the transitions to come (personal interview, 21 November 2004).

Monkeybone provides a classic example of both methods. Firstly, the opening credit sequence aesthetically prefigures the world to come, portraying the protagonist, Stewart, painting a picture that sets the artistic style for the animated sequences. This is apt given that the animated world, to which he will be transported on falling into a coma, reflects his own nightmare unconscious – “a land where his fevered imagination is given form” (Megahey 2). Secondly, we do meet a character from the imaginative world early on in the live action context, albeit that he is as yet inanimate. Following the credit sequence, an audience watches a premiere of Stewart’s animated pilot, and we, along with the audience, are introduced to Stewart’s alter ego, Monkeybone, in 2-D form.⁶² At the reception afterwards we are introduced – courtesy of the merchandising department – to 3-D models of the Monkeybone character. There is an uncanny sense of *déjà vu* when, on arrival in Down Town, Stewart meets an exact replica of the 3-D version, now brought to life by stop-motion animation.

⁶² This use of a “film within a film” at the beginning of the story is similar to that of the animated short *Somethin’s Cookin’* at the start of *Roger Rabbit*. At the conclusion of the short, the camera tracks back from Roger – so that he is revealed to be on a film set in the live action world. Cholodenko sees this operation as having “vertiginous consequences”, as *Somethin’s Cookin’* is ostensibly only a cartoon until its characters answer their director as “live actors” and refigure *Somethin’s Cookin’* as both cartoon animation and live action at the same time (223).

Švankmajer's worlds in *Alice* are less distinctly demarcated, but nonetheless the nature of the realm to come is prefigured in the opening live action sequence. And the reappearance of inanimate objects in the animated sequences contributes to the overall uncanny effect. Freud speaks of repetition arousing "the sense of helplessness experienced in some dream states" ("The Uncanny" 358-9). Recalling this inescapable sense of helplessness is the Mad Hatter's tea party, replayed incessantly until the movements become frenzied. (See *Clip 3, Chapter 4* on DVD.) The March Hare keeps spreading butter onto his fob watch and wiping it off. The Mad Hatter marionette keeps downing tea and crying for clean cups. The editing gathers speed as the characters move round the table, the montage repeating the exact same elements over and over, against a soundtrack of ticking clocks. It is a nightmarish loop that evokes the Freudian factor of fateful, inescapable and involuntary repetition ("The Uncanny" 359-60).

4.4.4 Uncanny or grotesque?

In "Surrealism, Fantasy and the Grotesque", O'Pray argues that Švankmajer's material should not be identified with the uncanny, but rather with the grotesque – a prominent feature of the Czech puppet tradition (256).⁶³ He cites the meshing of humour with horror in Švankmajer's work, and the fact that Freud sees humour as undermining the fear, horror and menace that contribute to the uncanny ("Surrealism, Fantasy and the Grotesque" 256). By way of contrast to the uncanny, the principle of laughter – according to Bakhtin's introduction to *Rabelais and His World* – permeates the grotesque (38). Yet, I believe that *Faust*, while containing pronounced elements of irony and humour, particularly in the clown character, is not consistently comical enough to lose its overwhelming sense of the uncanny. Moreover, O'Pray's

⁶³ Interestingly, Wolfgang Kayser points out that Goethe, who wrote one version of *Faust* that Švankmajer draws upon, was steeped in the grotesque tradition (47). Mikhael Bakhtin proposes that the essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, "that of the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (19-20). This conversion from the ethereal to the corporeal is also tied to the carnivalesque inversion of hierarchies. Švankmajer certainly seems to invert the traditional order in *Faust*, rendering the divine in earthly terms. Not only are angels and devils portrayed as tangible wooden puppets who do physical battle over Faust's soul, but blood, food and sex all feature prominently within the context of an essentially spiritual tale.

analysis in this instance is limited to that of Švankmajer's short films, the most recent work discussed being *Down to the Cellar*, 1983. In my view, *Faust*, made eleven years later in 1994, is a far darker film.⁶⁴

O'Pray further points out that for Freud, an uncanny effect cannot be achieved in a "world of representation" that departs from the realities we are familiar with, which is why, for him, the fairy tale rarely evokes the uncanny ("Surrealism, Fantasy and the Grotesque" 256). However, in both *Alice* and *Faust*, the settings are for the most part diegetic – we rarely leave the world that we know, as we often do within the genre of fairytale. Tellingly, in discussing Švankmajer's short works, O'Pray concedes that *Down to the Cellar* – which I suggest prefigures *Alice* in its style and subject matter – seems to be the closest Švankmajer comes to the uncanny. O'Pray attributes this uncanny sense to the use of a live action young girl as protagonist, "with whose terror we can identify", and also to the more naturalistic setting ("Surrealism, Fantasy and the Grotesque" 257).⁶⁵ *Alice* is likewise played by a live action girl, which fosters a similar sense of the uncanny. There is also a live action actor in the role of Faust, although – like Alice – he is also represented through puppetry and animation. Both *Alice* and *Faust* involve a consistent doubling of real and animated protagonists, and the resulting disjunctions and discrepancies help to create in the audience an abiding sense of the uncanny.

⁶⁴ I contacted Peta Shera to ask her for a response to Michael O'Pray's assertion that humour neutralises the uncanny effect in Švankmajer's work. She suggests the following: "Švankmajer may well be using humour in all his films, but it doesn't all translate into humour that all his audiences understand. I'm sure that in his work there are levels of commentary and reference that I don't appreciate, even for the simple reason that I don't share Švankmajer's Czech heritage. So for those who watch his film and don't share the jokes that he might have included, other forces, such as the uncanny, become important. I also think that it might be important to consider whether each film encourages its spectators to react differently... so maybe some of his films draw more heavily on the grotesque, as O'Pray suggests, but other works, like *Faust*, depart from this?" (personal correspondence with the author, 14 December 2004).

⁶⁵ Similarly describing the need for real-life figures in order to evoke the uncanny, Furniss compares the images of *Alice* with figures in some of Švankmajer's earlier works. She believes that the clay body parts of *Darkness, Lightness, Darkness* (1989) and the cut-outs of *Manly Games* (1988) remain at the level of animated figures, rather than crossing into the realm of anything approaching a living being. Moreover, Švankmajer makes no attempt to link the images to a real world context – for example the backgrounds in both are clearly fabricated. Furniss concludes that although it is difficult to say just what makes the images in *Alice* somewhat uncanny, "clearly the linking of the 'real world' and animated imagery tends to encourage the effect" (173).

4.4.5 The double

The doubling of the characters Alice and Faust in their animated forms also contributes to their uncanny effect. As discussed in Chapter 3 on dreams, Freud sees one of the most prominent themes of the uncanny as being connected with the phenomenon of the double (356). A pronouncedly uncanny moment is enacted when the tiny doll version of Alice is forced to “walk the plank” backwards into a pot of hot milk. (See *Clip 4, Chapter 4* on DVD.) She rises out of the milk as an enormous effigy, which cracks open to reveal the real-life Alice. The doubling in the transformation of doll to effigy, and redoubling in the return to the live-action Alice creates a disarmingly uncanny effect.

The effect is also uncanny where Faust appears as a marionette, controlled by unseen forces. Perhaps the most discomfiting moments are those where the character Mephistopheles turns himself into a clay mirror of Faust, animated via pixilation: for perhaps Švankmajer’s implication is that the devil is contained by – or is a projection of – each one of us? The frame-by-frame animation of Faust’s own live action face creates an impression of something dead come alive, erasing conventional distinctions between reality and the imagination.

4.4.6 Effacement of reality/ imagination

Freud identifies the thin line between the animate and inanimate as another aspect of the uncanny, basing his thinking on the findings of German writer Jentsch.⁶⁶ According to Jentsch, a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty as to whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one (cited in “The Uncanny” 354). It seems that animation as a genre in itself resonates with that aspect of the Freudian uncanny concerned with the point at which “the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced” (“The Uncanny” 367).

⁶⁶ Jentsch is author of “Zur Psychologie des Umheimlichen”, 1906.

In the opening scene, the camera pans across a stream where pebbles are being thrown into the water. It tilts up to reveal an unnaturally stilted Alice sitting by her even more lifeless nanny, who is cut off by the frame at the neck, and is so static that one thinks she is a mannequin until her hand comes down to slap Alice. And so the line between live corporeal body and doll is blurred from the outset. The boundary between animate and inanimate is also effaced via the puppetry in *Faust*. At times the puppets are manipulated by hands of an unseen puppeteer, at other times the puppets rush off on their own – brought to life via stop motion animation. At still other moments, the puppets lie motionless, their strings in disarray – reminding us of their inherently inanimate nature and of the fact that it is only the act of manipulation, or occasionally of stop-animation, that provides them with an uncanny semblance of life.

The line between life and death wavers particularly when, in a necromantic moment, the live-action Faust seduces the puppet version of Helen. (See *Clip 5, Chapter 4* on DVD.) She lies back corpse-like, and the animated Romilo puppet breaks out from inside her inanimate form. Shera argues that Faust is “compelled to struggle with what becomes an unstable, decaying border between flesh and puppet forms” and that this physical instability complements his internal, moral struggle (14). And so the very use of puppetry as medium bespeaks Faust’s greatest fear – that of his own mortality.

Similarly, animation is used to convey Faust’s internal fears and desires. In fact, Shera sees animation as a disruptive force in *Faust*, interrupting and destroying the live action that is Faust’s mortal realm (12). Whereas the live action scenes have a smooth visual continuity, Shera posits that the animation operates against this flow, and that the animated sequences rupture Faust’s sense of purpose:

...from the smashed head of the baby, to the bowling ball
that becomes Mephistopheles' face, animated sequences
arrest Faustus' sense of normal time; his identity and his

capabilities. Animation reminds Faustus that he is limited spatially and temporally; that he is mortal. (12)

The baby head sequence is one that “arrests Faust’s sense of real time” and most pertinently speaks to his fear of mortality. He finds a glass alembic with clay inside, which morphs into an inanimate clay baby. In the words of Švankmajer’s screenplay, Faust “draws the life-giving *Shem ha-m’ forash*, carefully folds the paper and puts it into the baby’s mouth” (13). Instantaneously the baby comes to animated life, and swiftly ages into a child, into an adult with Faust’s face and then into an old man – before finally freezing into a grinning corpse that Faust smashes in despair. (See Clip 6, Chapter 4 on DVD.)



Figure 24: The baby-turned-corpse in *Faust*

The metamorphosis from baby to skeleton aligns life and death to chilling effect – both for Faust and for the audience. Interestingly, in an interview with Barry Curtis, Irene Kotlarz claims that there is always a relation between animation and the grotesque and horrific, “because animation or reanimation as a metaphor for bringing something alive is also part of the vocabulary of horror” (27-8).⁶⁷ Furthermore, there is animation’s capacity for the visceral transformation of time and flesh, as in the morphing from baby to corpse: animation is used here to enact a metaphor of mortality.

⁶⁷ Kotlarz also speaks about animation’s subversion of accepted boundaries and its close association with pornography, and of the preoccupation with things that can go wrong with the body, “although they are bracketed in a kind of metaphorical realm” (cited in Curtis 28, 30).

Just as the animation, in swiftly transforming a baby to a corpse, suggests another temporal realm, animation can suggest the existence of deeply subjective spatial realms.

4.5 Space

The subjective treatment of space is one means by which Švankmajer conveys the unconscious. Švera maintains that by revealing fractures between space and time, Švankmajer's animation is the antithesis to mainstream forms of animation, exemplified by Disney productions that attempt to smooth over spatio-temporal discrepancies (12).

Following the opening credit sequence, with its extreme close-up of Alice's mouth, we cut to an exterior shot of a stream in the woods, which is soon stripped away to become first a nursery and then a field of raw earth – on which stands a desk with a single drawer. Alice must squeeze herself into the drawer and descend a lift shaft, before entering the dark, gloomy cellars of the film's netherland. As in a dream, any sense of geographic space is lost as Alice wanders between basements and cellars, stairs and corridors. There is a door within a door; a stream running through a field within a room; a stage set within the field; a house within the house, and another house behind the façade of a house made of children's building blocks.



Figure 25: Alice trapped in the house made of children's building blocks

Even though we move unpredictably about, we never feel that we have entirely abandoned the waking world, in that the *mise-en-scène* is so prosaic in its elements. This is despite these elements appearing in unexpected combinations, such as the stream running through a room. According to

Furniss, *Alice* was shot at full scale, with Švankmajer placing his live actress and animated creatures within what appear to be real rooms, or outside on rocky terrain – creating a very realistic diegetic space (161).⁶⁸ Moreover, Geoff Andrew explains, the real rooms were those of a converted old bakery, and were used once more for the shooting of *Faust* (6). The exteriors for both *Alice* and *Faust* are also very quotidian. Hames describes the Prague of *Faust* as “no tourist picturebook, magic city or Expressionist vision, but an all too tangible world of the everyday – of trams, greasy raincoats, beer and sausages” (*Dark Alchemy* 41-2).

The consistent use of diegetic space – even in portraying the realms of the unconscious – is by way of contrast with the stylised carnivalesque sets used in *Monkeybone*, to delineate Down Town from reality. Russell asserts that, since one cannot achieve an entirely realistic look for the animated world, it is better for it to look significantly different from its real world counterpart (personal interview, 21 November 2004). In keeping with this thinking, Down Town is lit with expressionistic, high contrast lighting, using coloured mist and areas of darkness, as opposed to the ordinary world, which is lit with the high key, low contrast lighting standard for Hollywood comedies.

Roger Rabbit similarly distinguishes visually between Los Angeles and Toontown, which is rendered entirely in 2-D cell animation – an environment into which the human protagonist Eddie Valiant ventures for a short time. For the most part though, cartoon characters travel into the real world.⁶⁹ Cholodenko labels the relationship a “doubled *mise-en-scène*”, and holds that the location of Toontown in relation to Los Angeles is in a sense “both determinable and indeterminable at the same time” (228). The relationship between the locations seems determinable – given that we can glimpse Toontown just behind the wall behind the Acme factory. Yet at the same

⁶⁸ Furniss indicates that shooting in real spaces and at full (1:1) scale is usual practice for films that employ pixilation or live action/ animation, and could be described as the equivalent of location shooting in live action production (161).

⁶⁹ Russell claims that in *Roger Rabbit* we stay, for the most part, out of the Toon world precisely because of the huge aesthetic disjunction between cartoons and live actors. He points out that where the Toons appear in the real world, their colouring is not too high key: they don't use bright red or green for example. They are graded down so that they can respond to lighting in a real world context. Russell believes that in *Scooby Doo* (2002: dir. Raja Gosnell), the characters are too high key in their colouring and cannot be integrated into the real world setting (personal interview, 21 November 2004).

time, in order to reach Toontown, Valiant has inexplicably to drive through a long tunnel. There is also a temporal disjunction between the two worlds: when Valiant drives down the tunnel, it is night in Los Angeles. (See *Clip 7, Chapter 4* on DVD.) Yet, when he emerges it is bright day in Toontown, so intensely high key in its rendering that Valiant squeezes his eyes shut against the glare – echoing our own impulse to do the same.

In *Alice*, there is no distinctive visual treatment of the unconscious realm in terms of lighting or production design. Rather we remain within diegetic spaces throughout the animated sequences, so that the unconscious realm is closely tied with the real world of objects. Furniss articulates this use of realism to inform even animated sequences:

The close-ups of the white rabbit's eerily thrashing, ugly yellowed teeth are reminiscent of something at least mildly fear-evoking or repulsive that most people have seen in the real world. (173)

Furniss goes on to describe the wiping noise that accompanies the rabbit's clearing sawdust off his pocket watch, and argues that "for being a simple sound and a succinct movement, they are resoundingly realistic" (173). According to Stuart Aitken and Leo Zonn, space describes the world of the film's diegesis, "indicated by visual, and to a lesser extent, aural representations" (cited in Walker 88). Švankmajer's visual treatments of screen space have been shown to articulate the inter-penetration of conscious and unconscious realms. Since aural representations are also central to the articulation of space, Švankmajer's realistic and somewhat minimalist use of sound also bears investigation.

4.6 Sound

4.6.1 The cinesonic place

Alison Walker argues for a “sonic understanding” of cinematic place (88). She describes how in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001: dir. Peter Jackson), the filmmakers found ways to “sonically conceptualise the properties and locales of evil, both physically (tied to specific, concrete sources) and metaphysically (articulating non-concrete or non-material entities)” (89, Walker’s parentheses). She believes that the interaction between the physical and metaphysical articulates the “cinesonic place, where emotional and narrative value is expressed beyond the concrete world depicted by the image” (89).

Yet, whereas sound design in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy uses diegetic and non-diegetic sounds in combination to create a rich aural tapestry, Švankmajer’s sound design is far sparser, and for the most part incorporates only diegetic sound. Jocelyn Szczepaniak-Gillece talks of Švankmajer’s “onomatopoeic music of the ordinary” to describe the mechanical noises that accompany the everyday objects he uses in his animation (2). But even though what we hear remains tied to what we see on the screen, these diegetic sounds are used not only on a physical level, but also on a metaphysical one to articulate the characters’ states of mind.

Responding to the question as to what importance he gives to the role of sound, Švankmajer states:

The more deeply a person probes into the fantastic, the more he needs to be realistic in form. I repeat time and time again that it is my desire to make “fantastic documentaries”. The nearer I get to my goal the more subversive effect my films will have. (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 112)

In employing naturalistic sound design to probe the fantastic Švankmajer has for a long time collaborated with sound designer Ivo Spalj.⁷⁰ They are both committed to the notion of “concrete” sound recordings, creating a synthesis with Švankmajer’s object-based animations. Startlingly clear sound, such as that of the sawdust seeping from the White Rabbit in *Alice*, works in conjunction with close-ups to intensify our perceptions of small details. O’Pray talks about how, in Švankmajer’s films, there is a “doubling” on the moment of editing – so that sound often comes just after the cut (*The Animator of Prague* DVD). This emphatic cutting of sound in correspondence with image, and the anchorage of sound to a visible source, renders Švankmajer’s animation more tangible and grounded.

Even where sound is actually staged, we see the source of it, and in fact, Švankmajer plays on the relationship between natural and staged sounds. Thunder is a notable example in *Faust*. The first peals accompany real lightning, but later the thunder is re-created by the puppeteer shaking a sheet of metal, an action repeated at several portentous moments. When tiny devil marionettes climb out of Mephistopheles’ mouth, the thunder rolls incessantly. In turn, angel marionettes emerge from the angel effigy, accompanied by the tinkling of bells. The low- and high-pitched sounds create a cacophony, which echoes the clamour in Faust’s mind as he wrestles with himself as to whether or not he should sign over his soul. His decision, as he signs in blood, is sonically endorsed as the thunder wins out – and we cut to the hands shaking the metal. The thunder comes to define a cinesonic space that encapsulates the satanic – and defines Faust’s state of mind as he descends into Lucifer’s realm.

Moreover, concrete diegetic sounds are used to mark pivotal points in Faust’s metaphysical journey. When he first discovers the text for the play, he reads aloud, “So I resolve my soul to free, through blackest magic and dark alchemy”. No sooner has he muttered this intention, the very pretext for the play, and in turn the film, than a red bulb starts to flash, accompanied by a buzzing and ringing. On a literal level, this is Faust’s stage call. He heeds the

⁷⁰ Ivo Spalj was Sound Designer on *Alice*, *Faust*, *Conspirators of Pleasure* and *Little Otik*, as well as on a number of Švankmajer’s shorts.

call, and emerging on stage, finds an audience gathered. But the sounds also create subjective depth, in articulating the turmoil of Faust's mind, and the buzz and ring become a repeated sound motif at two further points, each of which marks a turning point in his metaphysical experience.

The second buzzing and ringing, which with heightened urgency carries on for longer than before, underlines Faust's dawning disillusionment as he accuses Mephistopheles of being a liar. The third occurrence of the motif happens moments before Faust meets his fate, when to the buzzing and ringing are added the clashing metal, the crackling of visible flames and the clamour of devil marionettes. (See *Clip 8, Chapter 4* on DVD.) This time Faust rushes out onto the street, where he is run over before an audience of passers-by. With the high-pitched screeching of brakes and the collision with Mephistopheles' car, the deafening crescendo cuts to silence as Faust dies. Nobody says a word. The sound design seems to suggest that it is not just that Faust has met his end, but that the turmoil in his mind has subsided at last. Sound has been used in all three cases to articulate Faust's internal menace, and to mark crucial metaphysical points.

Bordwell and Thompson point out that the use of sound to enter a character's state of mind is so common that we need to distinguish between internal and external diegetic sound: external diegetic sound is that which spectators take to have a physical source in the scene (*Film Art* 307). Internal diegetic sound is that which comes from "inside" the mind of a character; it is subjective (*Film Art* 307). However, while Švankmajer limits himself to external diegetic sounds, these seem nonetheless to serve the purposes of internal diegetic sound. We see the rolls of thunder being created in diegetic terms, and yet such sound devices enable the narration to achieve subjective depth.⁷¹

Some use is made in *Alice* of off-screen diegetic sound, but these are for the most part eventually revealed to have an on-screen source. For instance, the repetitive splashing in the early nursery scene is finally shown to come from Alice throwing pebbles into a cup of tea, and the inexplicable ticking that

⁷¹ This "allusive" use of sound is also used in some live action genres marked by emotional excess rather than "realism", such as Bollywood and Melodrama.

accompanies the same scene at last makes sense as coming from the White Rabbit's fob watch. The effect of off-screen sound is usually to give a sense of a narrative world that extends beyond the boundary of the screen. It follows that the lack of sustained off-screen sounds in Švankmajer's work situates us resolutely in the character's imagination or unconscious.

Even atmosphere tracks are prone to mutate without logical explanation, as are the visuals – in the nature of an ever-shifting dream. The first time Alice looks from the room where she is trapped, through a miniature doorway, she sees painted sets of a garden, and correspondingly there is an ambient pastoral track. Minutes later when she peers outside once more, the sets are replaced by ones of an ocean, with the accompanying sounds of waves and seagulls. Whereas atmosphere tracks usually provide a seamless and convincing background to a character's action, here the variable track – in conjunction with the shifting visuals – does more to suggest the subjective nature of Alice's perception.

Indeed, throughout *Alice*, sound is used to describe the protagonist's state of mind, and the play between the conscious and unconscious. There are times when a sound ostensibly comes from a source for which it is not appropriate on a literal level, such as in *Alice*, when a great whinnying sound emanates from the patently non-equine fish and bird skeletons pulling a cart. The implied comparison of the skeletal creatures with horses creates a comedic moment through what Bordwell and Thompson call an "audiovisual pun" (*Film Art* 306). Alternatively, one could experience the low-fidelity sound as undercutting the image – subverting the ordinary in a Surrealist vein, and speaking to the free associations of Alice's unconscious.



Figure 26: The whinnying skeletons in *Alice*

There is a similarly dreamlike treatment of sound when Alice hears the ear-splitting wailing of a baby. The White Rabbit throws the bundle at Alice, and the moment she touches it, it transforms to a grunting pig. Švankmajer claims that this transformation is part of the “logic of dreams” and is, in fact, a moment directly transposed from Lewis Carroll’s original, which Švankmajer describes as “pure infantile dream” (“Švankmajer on *Alice*” 1). However, unlike in the original, Švankmajer’s Alice – and in turn we as audience – do not see the baby’s face, but only the pig as it emerges from its swaddling clothes: so sound is instrumental in blurring the bounds between reality and imagination.⁷² Walker writes that “sound oscillates a relationship between various, juxtaposed spaces and places, facilitating a form of cinematic articulation beyond the visual” (88). Certainly in this instance, Švankmajer has employed sound to articulate the oscillation between reality and the imagination, between the conscious and unconscious realms.

4.6.2 Sound transitions

Where Švankmajer implements transitions between realms, sound plays a pivotal role. In *Alice*, wind blows as she runs from her room onto the field of raw earth, evoking an eerie atmosphere befitting the first stage of slippage into the unconscious. The second stage of slippage is the rabbit hole, treated as an industrial lift. The cranking diegetic sounds are heightened to become a mechanical cacophony, which underscores Alice’s sinking into the depths of her unconscious. Yet another cacophonous sequence accompanies Alice’s transition back to the waking world in the penultimate scene. The White Rabbit clashes his scissors at the Queen’s command to chop off Alice’s head, and is soon joined by the skeletal creatures beating pots with spoons. They create a din that matches the fast-cut montage of Alice’s shaking head – cut together with other heads – culminating on her own head as she wakes in the nursery. The racket helps to articulate the transition of Alice back to consciousness.

⁷² In the novel, the transformation of baby to pig is made both via its reported grunting, as well as in subtle visual terms: “The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it. There could be no doubt that it had a *very* turn-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose; also its eyes were getting extremely small for a baby: altogether Alice did not like the look of the thing at all” (Carroll 79).

Notably, in more mainstream films, transitions between real and imagined space are often underscored by music. In *Monkeybone*, after the car crash that sends Stuart into a coma, Julie's voice is accompanied by a creepy orchestral score with wordless singing. The tempo increases as Stuart finds himself on the roller coaster into the limbo world of Down Town – the more upbeat music becoming integrated with the mechanical sounds of the roller coaster. On arrival in Down Town, the music turns altogether lively with the ditty "Welcome to Down Town while you're in your coma!" before subsiding into a carnivalesque hubbub.

Similarly, in *Roger Rabbit*, the first time we glimpse Toon Town over the wall of the Acme factory is to the strains of fairground music, which defines Toon Town as a realm removed. And when Valiant travels to Toon Town, his approach through the tunnel is accompanied by high adrenaline orchestral music that rises on a high trumpet note as the red curtain at the tunnel's end rises to let him enter. As he emerges, Toontown bursts into song, the Toons singing "Smile, Valiant smile" in the most brazen of Hollywood traditions. As in *Monkeybone*, music – and particularly song – is used to define a separate world. In fact in *Roger Rabbit*, the entire sound design becomes cartoonesque for the Toontown sequence – with spot effects of onomatopoeic "bings and boops".

Švankmajer, on the other hand, unremittingly uses "concrete" sound effects, and steers almost entirely away from music. In *Alice*, the only music is the piano under the end credits. *Faust* features Bach's *Fugue* under the front- and end credits, but the only musical sequence within the film is from Gounod's opera version of *Faust*. The opera is by no means treated as sacrosanct: while ballerinas dance in a field, a tractor noisily harvests the crop, and the sequence ends with thunder and lightening almost overwhelming the music. Švankmajer maintains that in his concept of "fantastic documentaries", there is no room for music, except as an artefact, and that "real noises are much more effective" (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 112). An artefact is conceivably what the Gounod opera sequence entails, as it is one more genre in the layering of different versions of the *Faust* myth.

Walker believes that “the mobile nature of sound enables extension across imaginary space into lived ones” (89). Švankmajer might steer away from music for the most part, a common means of making transitions, but sound design in his work does articulate his characters’ internal states, and their oscillation between imagined and lived spaces.

4.7 Crossing over

Having examined the way in which sound aids the implementation of transitions, it remains to consider how Švankmajer enacts movement between realms in visual terms. According to Shera, Švankmajer achieves a staccato-like effect in his work by cutting between very different forms of action, and, even more effectively, by cutting between live action and animation (13). The staccato effect is amplified by the short duration of most shots: Švankmajer claims that *Alice* and *Faust* were filmed using “an assembly of short, very short and a few single-framed shots” (cited in Hames, *Dark Alchemy* 113).⁷³ The single-framed shots in isolation are of course not apparent to the viewer, but work together to build transitions. For example, isolating single frames on the DVD reveals that the transitions between the real Alice and her doll version are achieved by cutting together one or two frames at a time – in order to go from the life-size Alice to her miniature doll version.

Similarly, transitions between spatial realms for the most part occur swiftly. Alice crosses the bare earth towards a desk with a single drawer that stands in the middle of the wind-swept plain. Having seen the White Rabbit climb inside, she follows, squeezing herself into the impossibly small drawer. The drawer acts as a portal between the ordinary world and the nether realm – or on a metaphoric level, between her conscious and unconscious. Wells describes the drawer as being Švankmajer’s “most consistent symbol for the subconscious” (“Body consciousness” 191).⁷⁴ The drawer also serves in this

⁷³ *Alice* was made using 2000 shots, and *Faust* comprised even more (Hames, “Dark Alchemy” 113).

⁷⁴ The drawer is also used to signify the unconscious in Švankmajer’s *Virile Games*, 1998.

particular instance as a portal that must be entered in order to “cross over” into the unconscious.⁷⁵

But this crossing over is not straightforward, as portals exist within portals. Soon after emerging from the drawer into a corridor, Alice falls down the renowned rabbit hole, interpreted as an extraordinarily long lift shaft – the movement of which is conveyed by a vertical dolly past multiple shelves or storeys, and by a strip of light moving repeatedly up over Alice’s face. In the nether world Alice discovers several more desk drawers, some of which contain items from the original book, such as the ink that makes her shrink and the tarts that make her grow. In a sense, the ink and tarts serve as further portals in allowing Alice access to different realms. After all, she needs to be tiny to fit through the miniature door within a door – the first in a whole series of doors through which she must pass. The existence of portals within portals seemingly defies any notion of distinct waking and dreaming realms: rather Alice consistently journeys into new layers of the unconscious.

This layering of the unconscious realm contrasts with the distinctive treatment of worlds in *Monkeybone*. (See *Clip 9, Chapter 4* on DVD.) A car crash sends Stewart into a coma, experienced as the limbo world of Down Town – which also represents his unconscious, styled on his own artwork. On the crash there is a fade up to white, and a cut to a low angle close-up of Stewart’s girlfriend Julie, from Stewart’s point of view. Next we cut to a low angle beneath the hospital bed, and crane down in a slow revolve, with Stewart’s almost mummified body descending with us – leaving a hole in the bed above.⁷⁶ The perfect silhouette evokes the kind that cartoon characters leave – for example where Roger Rabbit is catapulted through an office window – so prefiguring the cartoonesque world of Down Town. From the revolving pull-back we cut to a close-up of Stewart’s face as he descends a roller coaster. Notably, Down Town always maintains its “below-world” status, and subsequent transitions frequently involve a directional movement

⁷⁵ Leslie Felperin points out that the cellar, also appearing in *Alice*, is a “familiar metaphor for the unconscious” (2).

⁷⁶ On the *Monkeybone* DVD director’s commentary, Henry Sellick claims that this shot was inspired by one in *Trainspotting* (1996: dir. Danny Boyle), in which a character falls through the carpet. He felt that rather than the usual image of a spirit rising up, it would be more direct having him drop out of his body into the underworld.

up or down. In *Alice*, however, there is no logical directionality and we never reverse the fall by moving upwards again to return Alice to her nursery. But in a sense we never left the space of the ordinary world behind in the first place: rather the conscious and unconscious realms are intertwined via the use of diegetic, albeit scrambled, spaces throughout.

The diegesis in *Alice* is further entrenched by transitions back to reality as regards objects. In a sequence towards the film's end, the Queen of Hearts, an animated 2-D card cut-out, commands Alice to play croquet and to pick out a flamingo to use as a club. (See *Clip 10, Chapter 4* on DVD.) Like the Queen, the flamingos are 2-D figures removable from 2-D cards. The croquet balls are pincushions, as found in sewing kits. But just as Alice strikes, the flamingos turn into live squawking hens and the pincushions into hedgehogs. This transition to live-action animals is made via a fast dissolve. It could be seen as a "form edit", defined in Roy Thompson's *Grammar of the Edit* as "a transition from a shot which has a pronounced shape, colour and dimension, to another shot which has a similar shape, colour, dimension or sound" (62).⁷⁷ After Thompson's definitions, the transition also constitutes a "concept edit", in making a mental suggestion that plants a story in one's mind (64).⁷⁸ In fact, in combining two forms of edit – form and concept – the transition to live-action animals could be viewed as a "combined edit", probably the "highest achievement of the editor" (64). What this extraordinary transition does is to juxtapose the fantastical and the prosaic, letting the two worlds exist in close proximity – even rub up against each other. The shift by no means represents a complete return to the ordinary, for no sooner do the hens flap their way out of the window than does the animated stuffed White Rabbit re-appear. The implication of this juxtaposition via the combined edit is that the conscious and unconscious worlds are not separate and discreet, but co-existent and overlapping.

By way of contrast, transitions in *Monkeybone* are used to create two distinct worlds and to clarify which one we are in at any given time. On the first

⁷⁷ Bordwell and Thompson use the term "graphic match" for the edit that links shots by graphic similarities (*Film Art* 252).

⁷⁸ The concept edit is comparable to Eisenstein's concept of juxtaposition. Bordwell and Thompson discuss the juxtaposition of shots, and Eisenstein's treatment of shots as "emotional and conceptual units" (*Film Art* 285).

return to reality, an intermediary shot of the heart machine is employed – effective in that it has a graphic quality similar to the Down Town shot that precedes it. We are led back to the carnival rides in Down Town by a close-up of a moving fairground contraption. Next the optical effect of a wipe transports us from Down Town up into the real world. Later a rotating shot from an ornamental ceiling in the real world ends in a two way wipe – resembling the opening of curtains – to a shot of the character Death in Down Town, under an arch echoing the dome ceiling in the real world. This methodical approach to transitions is in keeping with Russell’s assertion that in moving between the live action and animated realms there must be smooth continuity between all the filmic elements, or else the transition will be too abrupt (personal interview, 21 November 2004). Russell advises that it is unwise to go for straight cutting, which is “a big arrow to technology change” (personal interview, 21 November 2004).

Notably, even though he does not shy away from technology change, Švankmajer usually avoids straight cuts for his major transitions. Alice’s return to consciousness is implemented via a fast rhythmical montage, triggered as she vigorously shakes her head in her refusal to be beheaded. In a speedy succession of fast dissolves, her head changes, in turn, to that of the March Hare, Mad Hatter, Fish and Frog Footmen, Alligator, Queen of Hearts, White Rabbit and finally back to her own head as she wakes in the nursery. In fact, a series of transitions throughout the film have brought Alice full circle back to where she started. Dissolves conventionally signify a substantial temporal transition and/or a mental shift, for example to flashback or dream. Hence the use of dissolves here queers the space-time of the narrative, and also suggests one mental state superimposing itself on another.

Although Alice ostensibly re-enters real geographic space when she wakes, Švankmajer implies that activities taking place in the unconscious realm impact on the conscious one. On her waking, playing cards are scattered over Alice’s body where there were none before; the glass rabbit case is really broken and the stuffed rabbit has disappeared. What is more, Alice finds that a hidden drawer really does exist beneath the cage, and so the portal to the

unconscious remains, suggesting that these transitions could recur at any given moment.

According to Frantisek Dryje, the answer as to whether Alice's experiences were a dream or reality is paradoxical, echoing the sentence from the film's opening: "close your eyes, otherwise you won't see anything" (132). Dryje interprets this as an exhortation to dream, "to experience something which contains the truth about our lives" (132). However, Dryje claims that Švankmajer does not want simply to paraphrase "perennial ideas about the unity of dreams and reality":

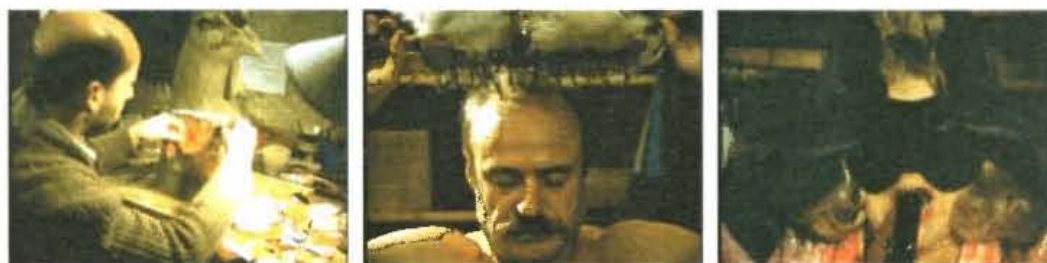
He sees the unity as more of an inner coherence of the world and the imagination – of the child's world of ideas, which is not unreal, but which gives things more than one utilitarian function and recreates their essences in a relationship. Wonderland is not "like" something. It is here, and the miraculous is in reality. (133)

This portrayal of the unconscious realm as existing within our conscious diverges from most Hollywood treatments of parallel realms, where we are invariably returned in the end to the real world, with the *status quo* re-established. The Monkeybone character, for one, is re-contained within Stewart's head, which according to the character Death is "where he belongs" (*Monkeybone* DVD). This denouement implies a closure and re-integration that is absent in the final scene of *Alice*, which rather suggests that she could at any moment be flung back into the unconscious depths of "wonderland".

4.8 Animating desire

In *The Conspirators of Pleasure* (1996) and *Little Otik* (2000), Švankmajer uses animation to a much more limited extent, most particularly to articulate his characters' innermost desires. *The Conspirators of Pleasure* tracks six ordinary individuals with bizarre sexual fetishes – from toe-sucking fish to the snorting of bread balls up the nose. A postwoman, shopkeeper, television presenter,

detective and two odd apartment dwellers go looking for the ingredients they require and concoct an array of devices, contraptions and effigies to fulfil their desires.



Figures 28, 29 and 30: Desire-fulfilling devices in *The Conspirators of Pleasure*

Notably, animation is reserved for the actualisation of the characters' fantasies. Švankmajer explains that the animation is mostly used in the sequences where the character creates an artificial partner (cited in Wendy Jackson 6). These sequences belong to the main characters of the film, Pivonka and Loubalová, next-door neighbours who create effigies of one another. Pivonka drives his effigy into the countryside, where he performs bizarre rites dressed as a chicken. Loubalová takes her straw effigy to an abandoned crypt, and then emerges from a wardrobe to whip it – whereupon it comes to animated life. The other characters' rituals are seen more from a distance, from an objective, third person perspective; however, Švankmajer explains that the relationship between Pivonka and Loubalová is shown from each other's point of view (cited in Wendy Jackson 6). Švankmajer apparently hesitated for a long time over whether he should do it in this way, or simply as the rest of the film was done – so that the relationship would be shown simply as one between the two of them:

Then I realised that these individuals did not really seek a living creature, but an effigy, an artificial partner. To make these things alive, I could do it only by animation. Therefore, I stepped out of the third person point of view, and put it into the context of the characters' own point of view. (cited in Wendy Jackson 6-7)

The animation thus enacts the subjectivity of the experience – the coming to life of desires in Pivonka and Loubalová's imaginations. Finally Pivonka, dressed as a chicken, crushes his effigy with a boulder, while Loubalová drowns hers in a basin. These violent acts are not entirely contained by the fantastical realm of actualised desire, but rather cross over into the realm of reality. For in a voodoo-like sense, the rituals enact real-life harm: the live action Loubalová is found crushed to death in her apartment, and the film ends with Pivonka going home to see the wardrobe slowly opening – as if Loubalová were there in reality. Švankmajer characteristically blurs the bounds between reality and the imagination, bringing desires disturbingly to life. Animation in *The Conspirators of Pleasure* is used to enact desire and its potentially disastrous consequences, and so is very much in keeping with Švankmajer's ongoing project to speak of the unconscious.



Figure 31: Pivonka dressed as a chicken with an effigy of Loubalová in *The Conspirators of Pleasure*

Similarly *Little Otik*, based on a Czech fairytale about a childless couple who long for a baby, employs animation to articulate desire. Mr Horák digs up a root that somewhat resembles a child, trims it and presents it to his wife, who is so desperate for a child that she treats it as real. Eventually Otik comes alive and develops a voracious appetite – devouring the pet cat, the postman and a visiting social worker. In the neighbouring apartment live the Stádlers and their eleven-year-old daughter Alžbetka, who notices the parallels between the events next door and the classic tale of *Otesánek*. Alžbetka's reading from the book starts to anticipate episodes from the film, and she sets out to protect Otik from his fate.



Figures 32 and 33: Little Otik turned live baby eats constantly; and Little Otik turned voracious monster attacks the social worker

Otik is clearly a manifestation of his parents' desire for a child, and even after they eventually abandon him, his existence is rekindled by Alžbetka's desire for a playmate. Švankmajer is more interested in interpreting unconscious desires than in articulating conscious intentions:

It's common knowledge that the subconscious components of our mind are just as meaningful as the conscious. So my preference is certainly for *post facto* interpretation rather than intention. In *Otesánek* the child devours his parents... Otik is the product of their desire, their rebellion against nature. This is not a child in the real sense of the word, but the materialisation of desire, of rebellion. (cited in Hames, "Bringing up baby" 26)

Otik's coming to life makes manifest his parents' desires, just as Faust's becoming a puppet manifests his desire for immortality. In fact, Švankmajer has identified thematic parallels between *Little Otik* and *Faust*, claiming that he suddenly realised that the fairytale *Otesánek* was, in effect, a topical version of the Faust myth: "a rebellion against nature and the tragic dimension of that rebellion" (cited in Hames, "Bringing up baby" 26).

Like *Faust*, *Little Otik* is set in contemporary Prague; however, unlike *Faust*, *Little Otik* includes no "othered" spatial realms such as painted sets, majestic mountains or deserts: instead, almost the entire film takes place in a grimy apartment block and its surrounding streets – with brief sojourns to a country house. Gary Morris argues that the film encourages us to suspend disbelief "partly by anchoring the narrative in humdrum characters (played straight by

their actors) and their depressingly realistic daily lives" (Morris's parentheses, 3). And whereas the characters Alice and Faust exist both as puppets and as real people, in *Little Otik* none of the characters changes form. The baby Otik does start out inanimate, but once brought to life via animation, he stays so throughout. And although he grows alarmingly, his fundamental form remains constant.

Apart from the animation of Otik, there are a handful of animated visual puns, such as when Mr Stádler says he is so hungry he could eat a plate of nails, whereupon his food is promptly animated as such. Food on the Stádler's dinner table is frequently animated, as it is on the television's mock-adverts, which deliver an incisive and ironic commentary about desire and consumption. Not animated – but nevertheless departing from the live action realism – are the hands that emerge from the old paedophile's trousers zipper each time he sees Alžbetka. The wriggling fingers articulate a type of desire that is distressing for us as audience, and speak pertinently to the potential destructiveness of desire – that is the thematic underpinning of the film as a whole.

Parallel to the main narrative runs an additional strand of animation accompanying Erben's original tale, read by Alžbetka – echoing the detached narration of Alice. The story is illustrated with 2-D animation, which in its relative stasis and illustrative style recalls the pages of a picture book. Švankmajer describes the narrative, which really comprises an independent animated short, as playing an important role in the film as a whole:

...In that it gives the spectator a clear picture of the original myth, unadulterated by the deformations of present-day society. It is this that provides the source of Alžbetka's "knowledge" and her "counteractivity". Thus animated, the Erben tale could stand on its own – with minor alterations. It's a film within a film. (cited in Hames, "Bringing up Baby" 28)

The story of *Little Otik* is about unbridled consumption as the monster devours anything in his path – echoing the unconstrained desires of the human characters. If the animation of Otik as a three-dimensional character in the main body of the film makes desire manifest and talks to consumption as the flip side of desire, the telling of the myth in parallel re-entrenches the metaphor. Since desire is predicated on lack, consumption does represent the annihilation rather than the satisfaction of desire.



Figure 34: A 2-D image used to animate the Erben tale in *Little Otik*

In both *The Conspirators of Pleasure* and *Little Otik*, there is no movement into non-quotidian realms. Instead, in actualising the notion of desire, the animation allows us access to the characters' subjective perspectives. Yet, the subjective realm that we enter, although endowed with magical elements, remains fundamentally rooted in the world of the here and now.

4.9 Conclusion

If it is animation's job to express the metaphysical, and to transform reality, it follows that where animation is combined with live action, the animation by extension affects the reality of the live action. However, in Švankmajer's oeuvre, there is no simple equation of live action with reality, and animation with unreality; instead the blending of the two media bespeaks the inter-penetration of the conscious and unconscious realms. Švankmajer's engagement with Surrealism, which endeavours to subvert the ordinary, upsets the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious. Closely linked to Surrealism is the Freudian notion of the uncanny, which can be discerned in several aspects of Švankmajer's work: the residual animism of objects; the fragmentation and disintegration of the whole; repetition creating the sense of

entrapment; the doubling of characters, and the uncertainty as to whether an object is alive or dead.

Švankmajer's refusal to make neat distinctions between waking and dreaming in *Alice* articulates his vision of coherence of the world and the imagination. This coherence is further developed in *Faust*, in which even more doubt is cast on the border between the conscious and unconscious. Yet, although we constantly cross the bounds of realism in Švankmajer's work, his treatment of *mise-en-scène* in *Alice* and *Faust* is unswervingly tied to reality – his filming for the most part taking place in diegetic spaces. However, the shifts from one space to another might not make geographic sense – but rather adhere to a kind of dream logic. Unlike in more mainstream films such as *Roger Rabbit* or *Monkeybone*, there is no distinctive visual or aural treatment of alternative realms in Švankmajer's work: production design and sound remain tied to the diegetic world.

Conspirators of Desire and *Little Otik* take even further Švankmajer's aim of exploring ruptures within the ordinary, remaining as they do entirely within the setting of the prosaic world – with the only animated elements being those that articulate the characters' desires. Desire is inextricably linked to the unconscious, the exploration of which drives all of Švankmajer's work. Švankmajer's constantly shifting border between reality and imagination, waking and dreaming, conscious and unconscious, is reflected in cinematic terms throughout his work. The flimsiness of the border reflects Švankmajer's belief in the force of the imagination, of fears and of desire, in our lives.

4.10 Implications for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*

Zinzi and the Boondogle was originally conceived as mixing live action with 3-D computer animation. The idea was that, whereas most of the film is set in the Real World, the Boondogle – as well as the baboons, dolphins and eagles – would be animated. The Bead World sequence, including the children

themselves, would be entirely animated.⁷⁹ Based on discussions with the animation company Triggerfish, which is at present developing concept designs for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, the most recent thinking is that the entire film will be animated. This is mainly due to the prohibitive costs in South Africa of compositing live action and 3-D animation. However, I have kept the discussion of mixing the media for two reasons: firstly, the integration of live action and animation has been integral to the conception of the project. Secondly, many of Švankmajer's techniques still have relevance for an entirely animated production, in which it would still be necessary to aesthetically demarcate the real and animated realms, and to enact visual and aural transitions between these worlds.

4.10.1 Magic in reality

To begin with, it is vital that the animated Bead World be foreshadowed from early on, lest it seem overly disjunctive – as Švankmajer does in the early nursery scene of *Alice*, before moving into the unconscious realm. As mentioned, Russell identifies two means of preparing an audience for transitions to an animated realm: either the human protagonist may spend time with an animated creature before being transported to its world; or aesthetic elements of the animation are introduced early into the live action (personal interview, 21 November 2004). *Zinzi and the Boondogle* contains both means of foreshadowing. Firstly, the children interact for some time with the animated Boondogle before venturing into the Bead World. Secondly, aesthetic elements of the Bead World are introduced in Valentine's Bead Curios, where all sorts of bead artefacts are on display, which in time become animated in the Bead World. Included in the shop are bead dolls, which prefigure the living bead dolls the children become to gain entry to the Bead World. Thus the groundwork for the Bead World's aesthetic is laid down in the film's early stages.

⁷⁹ *James and the Giant Peach* (1996: dir. Henry Sellick), is a useful example of the integration of live action and animation in a children's film. James starts off as live-action child, becomes animated for the duration of the peach journey, before returning to his live action status at the film's end. James' voice remains consistent throughout, as would be the case with Zinzi and her siblings.

Although the Real- and Bead Worlds in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* are more demarcated than are the conscious and unconscious in *Alice* and *Faust*, I would like to evoke something of Švankmajer's "miraculous in reality" (Dryje 133). It is crucial then, that from early on in the film, magical elements penetrate the ordinary world. Moreover, this penetration should ensure that the Bead World sequence is not so thematically and stylistically disparate as to seem to belong to a different movie. Thus the screenplay suggests ways to integrate magical elements from the start. In narrative terms, the pre-credit sequence features a two-headed dog introducing the story – long before the magical Boondogle makes his appearance and unsettles the quotidian environment. There are also visual pointers to a magical realm beyond, for instance Gogo's bangles that shimmer slightly at portentous moments.

I discussed the magical treatment of reality with production designer Vincent de Pater, who designed *Ja Zuster, Nee Zuster* (2002: dir. Peter Kramer). We concluded that it would be more effective if the Cape Town of the real world were not overly naturalistic, but rather had a certain hyper-reality befitting the genre of a magical children's adventure story (Personal discussion, 2 December 2004). He spoke about the way in which he "sharpened reality" in a children's film called *Minoes* (2002: dir. Vincent Bal), which was set in the real world but involved talking cats. De Pater saw to it that shop windows were re-dressed, that cars and bicycles were removed, and advertising stripped back, to try to create a magical, hyper-real world within the prosaic one. He urged me to do the same for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. Whereas I originally conceived of a documentary realism for the live action scenes, I am now convinced that a stripped back version of reality, a hyper-reality, would more effectively co-exist with the magical bead realm, and make for a more cohesive aesthetic for the film as a whole. It is also my hope that hinting at magical elements from the start will pre-empt an abrupt genre shift from kitchen sink melodrama to magical action adventure.

On the subject of production design, colour would be a crucial element in creating a sense of magic throughout. The houses in Zonnebloem, on the outskirts of the CBD where the film is set, could be intensified with colour grading – as could the colours of Vuyo's drawings. Zinzi's central dream

sequence, in which she envisions a baboon turning into a dolphin and then an eagle, could be colour-saturated, so also prefiguring the magic, and the unnaturally intense palette of the Bead World.

It is useful to examine Švankmajer's Surrealist treatment of the world in its subversion of the ordinary. In *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, I opt for a somewhat more rational narrative than do Surrealist filmmakers, given that I do not want to alienate a young audience. However, Švankmajer's consistent revelation of "the miraculous in reality" is a useful mantra in terms of constructing the real world of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* – one on which magical elements keep on impinging.

4.10.2 Moving between

Although there is inter-penetration between the two realms, with the Boondogle visiting the Real World, and the children the Bead World, we are always sure which of the realms we are in at any given time. In this sense the distinction between worlds is demarcated, as in *Roger Rabbit* and *Monkeybone*. Nonetheless, Švankmajer's work provides useful clues as to how I might implement transitions between the realms. For although the worlds in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* are visually distinct, there is no logical directionality as there is in *Monkeybone*, where Down Town exists "below" the ordinary world. Neither is there a geographic space that one can move through to get to the other world, as in the tunnel leading to Toontown in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*

Instead, as in Švankmajer's work, Cape Town and the Bead World are linked via portals. The first portal is the muddled bead badge that Zinzi creates in her fear and exhaustion. Crucially, as her hands jumble the designs, she is in a nightmarish state, in which she envisions the merging of the baboon, dolphin and eagle to form the mutant Boondogle. So her conjuring up of the Boondogle is rooted in her own imagination and the fear that has lodged within it – just as the creation of the animated Otik is a manifestation of his parents' desire for a child. The Boondogle is ultimately returned to his

rightful realm of the Bead World through the tearing up of the selfsame badge. The badge's destruction seals over the portal, but until that point the Boondogle moves freely between worlds.

The bead doll replicas of the children – in a voodoo-like sense – represent the second portal, in transporting Zinzi, Vuyo and Sam into the Bead World. Should these dolls unravel by sunset, the portal would seal over and they would be trapped in the Bead World for eternity. Notably, the dolls are created in the curio shop, containing many items for sale in traditional African markets. Significantly the marketplace is perceived in many African mythologies as a crossroads or liminal zone between the prosaic world and the spirit realm.⁸⁰ At the moment of transition into the Bead World, Gogo instructs the children to close their eyes. From Zinzi's point of view, we see the kinds of floating shapes that appear in our mind's eye as we squeeze our eyes shut against the sunlight. These shapes dissolve to floating beads, and – as the children open their eyes – dissolve into the Bead World shop, the contents of which are uncannily brought to life via animation.

4.10.3 Site of the uncanny

I am particularly interested in the uncanny effect that ambivalence around the animate and inanimate could produce in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. In connection with the uncanny, I have mentioned the doubt as to whether or not an object is alive. Freud discusses "the impression made by waxwork figures, ingeniously constructed dolls and automata" ("The Uncanny" 347). Even though they do not have the same semblance of life as do waxwork figures or automata, the bead dolls that transport the children into the Bead World should evoke this aspect of the uncanny. Firstly, they are constantly unravelling, which undermines their inanimate stasis. And secondly, the stiff doll-like forms are in fact animated in the Bead World. The Boondogle himself articulates the wavering line between life and death:

⁸⁰ For an in-depth discussion of African human and spirit worlds, see Martha G. Anderson and Christine Mullen Kreamer's *Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness* (11-80).

And how do you suppose you'll go?
You're not human now, you know.
Stiff and lifeless little toys –
Two beaded girls, two beaded boys!

Their ambiguous status slowly dawns on the children, before the Boondogle delivers his final “death blow”:

You have no blood, no bones, no breath,
It seems like life, it's more like death.

The uncanny is perhaps most prevalent during the Bead World sequence. Although the Bead World constitutes a parallel realm, it is still tied to the diegetic world in being a beaded mirror version of the children's neighbourhood, only made of beads. This shift could create the uncanny effect of “people, events, places, which become suddenly and frighteningly strange, although they are, in fact, quite familiar to the subject” (“The Uncanny” 340). Another aspect of the uncanny is the factor of repetition, which Freud sees as recalling “the sense of helplessness experienced in some dream states” (“The Uncanny” 358-9). The children I hope will evoke this uncanny sense when they become obsessed with their solo activities in the Bead World park, helplessly trapped in repetitive cycles. The editing for the park sequence could take its cue from Švankmajer's use of rhythmic montage in the Mad Hatter's tea party, where the same elements are repeated, gathering tempo as the scene reaches its climax. I envisage cutting in similar montage fashion from Leila continually pushing her bead teddies on the swings, to Sam spinning endlessly on the merry-go-round, to Vuyo completing somersault after somersault on the jungle gym's bar.

The ambivalence between the animate and inanimate in the children's incarnation as bead dolls; the fact that the Bead World mirrors the ordinary; and the children's incessant repetition of activities will, I hope, together give rise to an uncanny effect, befitting the beguiling yet dangerous Bead World.

4.10.4 Hearing interiority

Diegetic sound in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* should ideally not only portray the real environment. Rather, as in Švankmajer's work, it should also express internal states. It is tempting to use undercurrents of sound to create a menacing soundscape that articulates the fear Zinzi feels. Such a treatment of sound, however, could prove terrifying for children, so it would be vital to keep subjective sound in check.⁸¹ Instead one could seek ways of conveying interiority via sound without causing unnecessary distress. For one, the chaotic soundscape accompanying New Year's Eve in the film's opening scene should echo the tumult going on in Zinzi's mind.

Furthermore, sound should be used to help transport us from reality into the Bead World and *visa versa*. One means of moving across realms is by slip-editing or overlapping sound – used either to advance or to delay apprehension. Anticipatory sound, in the form of a “sound bridge”, could be used at times to drag our attention forward to the next sequence: the hubbub of the Bead World market could begin while the children are still shutting their eyes, to pull us into the next sequence. Similarly, holdover sound could be used to extend the Boondogle's barking, as the children magically transport themselves out of the Bead World. As they look around with relief at the familiar surroundings, we would hear the reverberations of barking, undercutting their false sense of security: for sure enough, the Boondogle is – within moments – to reappear in the Real World. Michael Rabiger suggests that by using sound and picture transitions creatively, we can transport the viewer forward without cumbersome optical effects like dissolves and fades: “We are also able to scatter important clues about our characters' subjective lives and inner imaginings, something film cannot otherwise easily do” (446).

It would be important to cue this anticipatory and holdover sound in the screenplay, to make sure that the potential access to the children's inner

⁸¹ Joanne Cantor has done extensive work on children's fear responses to film and television. In “Confronting Children's Fright Responses to Mass Media”, she maintains that any loud, unusual, or shockingly unexpected noise can cause a startle response or a fear response, particularly when it destabilizes the reality / fantasy distinction (139-49).

worlds is not lost. The anticipatory sound that pulls us into the Bead World could, for instance, be scripted as follows:

Gogo and the women clutch one another's hands in horror as the three children convulse, before suddenly vanishing in a rainbow explosion.

All that remains are the lifeless dolls lying expressionless on the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS IN BEAD WORLD - CONTINUOUS

The bead dolls still lie on the ground in the shop. Around them the sculptures, masks, figurines and wire creatures are moving around and making a hullabaloo.

Although I would like to explore the emotive potential of realistic, "concrete" sound, I do not intend to limit the sound design to exclusively diegetic effects, as does Švankmajer. Nor do I intend to exclude music, which I believe would help to convey the children's emotional lives – from the diegetic funereal singing to the non-diegetic music that accompanies their quest – upping the ante and underscoring their fears and their triumphs. Music will also be important in branding the film as South African and giving it an authentic Cape Town feel, which I will discuss further in the addendum to Chapter 6 on African animation. Non-diegetic sound effects could also come into play at times: when Zinzi first attempts to bead the hundred badges and is overcome by fear and exhaustion, reverberations in her head could help to create the cinesonic space of her fear. Zinzi's fear could be re-evoked through similar reverberations at later points, for instance at the moment Zinzi waivers before entering the ocean to save the dolphins. In this way, the sound could work in conjunction with image to create a reoccurring cinesonic space of fear.

4.10.5 Animating fear

Similarly, the animation in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* should be geared towards articulating states of mind such as fear. In *The Conspirators of Pleasure* and *Little Otik*, Švankmajer uses animation to articulate desire, and to guide our entry into characters' subjective experiences. Similarly, in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, animation disrupts the narrative to bespeak the children's

subjective experience of fear. The Boondogle's appearance is thus accompanied by an animated nightmare sequence: Zinzi beads the mutant badge figure while envisaging in her mind's eye the baboon, dolphin and eagle coming together in an entanglement of limbs. Animation could be further used to entrench the children's fears. On their quest to find Leila, the children have to face their very worst fears – Zinzi's of water, Vuyo of heights and Sam of the dark. Animation could be used to underline Zinzi's subjective experience on braving the ocean, rendering the ripples as a vortex that could swallow her up. Similarly, during Vuyo's climb to the eagle's nest, animation could emphasise his fear by creating spiralling vertiginous lines.

Since the Boondogle is brought to life within the realm of Zinzi's fear-ridden imagination, the Bead World as a site of fear may be viewed as an extension of the Boondogle himself. Conceivably, the animated Bead World exists "within" the world of the ordinary, as a beaded version of it – as opposed to being a separate geographical space.⁸² Švankmajer's work, in that he articulates dreams and the unconscious as coexisting within the mundane realm, offers a wealth of filmic possibilities for creating the imaginative Bead World, to exist in parallel with the here-and-now of contemporary Cape Town.

⁸² I will elaborate on this construction of the Bead World in Chapter 6, where I discuss African conceptions of spirit worlds.

CHAPTER 5

Otherworldly journeys and emotional voyages in Hayao Miyazaki's *anime* works

5.1 Introduction

In the work of *anime* filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, viewers are transported on journeys into other worlds, which simultaneously articulate internal, emotional voyages by the central characters. Miyazaki subverts gender stereotypes and empowers female viewers by enabling them to envision themselves – through cinematic identification with a screen character – as resourceful and heroic.

In order to throw into sharper relief Miyazaki's aesthetic and narrative techniques, this chapter starts by comparing Miyazaki's work with that of the Disney studio. The chapter goes on to question the reasons for Miyazaki's predominant use of female characters. To this end, the Japanese notion of "*shōjo*" is explored, which traditionally refers to the culture of adolescent girls, and which Miyazaki reinterprets and revitalises in his coming-of-age narratives.

Referring to the work of Bruno Bettelheim and Tzvetan Todorov, this chapter considers Miyazaki's employment of fairytale motifs and of fantasy to express the inner journeys of his characters, particularly through the construction of other worlds. Incorporating an extraordinary level of detail in order to evoke a visceral and emotionally charged experience, Miyazaki purpose-builds these realms in order to explore the dramatic questions motivating his protagonists.

Miyazaki sends his protagonists on transformative journeys, during which they achieve Bettelheim's concept of self-integration: these journeys all involve the completion of tasks, and engagement with tailor-made figures that speak to the protagonists' needs. I propose that the filmmaker's work of

articulating the inner lives and emotional journeys of his characters via fantasy helps children in the audience to come to terms with the challenges faced in their own journeys towards adulthood.

Six out of nine of Miyazaki's films feature self-sufficient young girls in leading roles.⁸³ Here we shall focus on three films: *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989) and *Spirited Away* (2002). I have selected these as the girl protagonists are most specifically the point of view characters, and their rites of passage are particularly pronounced. On occasion, Disney narratives – *The Little Mermaid* (1989: dir. Ron Clements and John Musker) and *Mulan* (1997: dir. Barry Cook) – that are also about young girls' coming of age, provide useful counterpoints to Miyazaki's work.

My Neighbour Totoro is set in the ordinary world, but a magical realm gradually impinges on the characters' quotidian existence. The film follows the journey of ten-year-old Satsuki, who moves to the countryside with her father and her younger sister Mei, to be near the hospital where her mother is convalescing. Mei strays into the undergrowth and comes across a family of furry creatures, led by a huge one she names "Totoro". Satsuki initially laughs at Mei's claims, and so when Totoro joins her and Mei at the bus stop, she is amazed to see him too. When their father is called to the hospital in an emergency and Mei goes missing, Satsuki calls upon Totoro's help in finding her. In doing so, Satsuki at last manages to integrate adult responsibility with a magical perspective on the world.



Figure 35: Satsuki and Mei explore nature in *My Neighbour Totoro*

⁸³ These six films are *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), *Castle in the Sky* (1986), *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989), *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2002) and *Howl: The Moving Castle* (2004).

Kiki's Delivery Service tells the story of a thirteen-year-old witch named Kiki, who as part of her apprenticeship has to leave home for a year – accompanied only by her talking black cat. She finds the harbour town of Koriko and a place to stay at the home of two bakers. Realising that flying her broomstick is her only marketable skill, she starts a delivery service. But she is painfully shy of her contemporaries, feeling like a social outcast because she is different. In an escalating crisis of confidence, Kiki loses her ability to fly, but regains it in time to save her friend Tombo who is trapped on a runaway airship. At last, Kiki writes to her parents, calling Koriko her home.



Figures 36 and 37: Kiki leaves her family and community behind in *Kiki's Delivery Service*; Chihiro travelling on the spirit train in *Spirited Away*

Spirited Away begins with ten-year-old Chihiro in a fit of misery at leaving everything known behind. Her family is driving to their new home when *en route* they come upon a deserted town. Her parents guzzle the bountiful food, and Chihiro wanders away and finds a giant bathhouse – only to become trapped in the spirit world, while her parents are transformed into pigs.⁸⁴ Hunted down by the spirits because she is a human, her only hope is to approach the witch Yubaba who runs the bathhouse, and demand a job. Yubaba lands Chihiro with all the worst tasks, including tending to the Stink Spirit and taming the insatiably hungry spirit, No Face. Finally, Chihiro is able to rescue her parents and escape the spirit realm a stronger and more complete person.

⁸⁴ The morphing of Chihiro's parents into pigs draws on the mythology around tempting food discussed in Chapter 3, and in particular echoes *The Odyssey*, in which Odysseus' men eat Circe's magic food and are turned into pigs.

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5.2 A Japanese Walt Disney?

According to Margaret Talbot, Japanese *anime* fans “bristle” at the idea that animation is just for children (“The Animated Life” 4). To be sure, *anime* films cover genres from romance to comedy, tragedy to adventure, and also serious psychological drama. Susan Napier points out that animated works are a major part of the output of Japanese studios, and amount to about half the tickets sold for movies in Japan (“From Akira” 7).⁸⁵

Miyazaki's style of *anime* has become synonymous with that of Studio Ghibli, where he has worked since 1985.⁸⁶ Napier points out that because Studio Ghibli is the most important animation studio in Japan, it occupies a position roughly equivalent to Disney (“Confronting Master Narratives” 471). However, Miyazaki has in the past dismissed the Disney product as “indecent” and “violent”, and resents being described as the Walt Disney of Japan.⁸⁷ Still, Napier proposes that while the agendas of the Ghibli and Disney studios may differ, they have many similarities: for one, both studios encompass a moral and ideological worldview that might be described as an “agenda”, and both use tightly controlled narratives with upbeat endings, often involving children or teenagers as the central protagonists (“Confronting Master Narratives” 471). Although Miyazaki's work has darker elements, Napier believes that much of his work can be seen to negotiate an essentially reassuring narrative structure, and that the messages that both Miyazaki and Disney impart can be described as humanistic, emphasising such values as loyalty, friendship, responsibility and initiative (“Confronting Master Narratives” 471).

⁸⁵ According to Jiwon Ahn, in the year 2000, about 23% percent of the entire printed materials in Japan were comics; more than 250 animation programs per week were aired on television, and an average of 1700 (short or feature length) animation films and about 2200 animated television programs were produced per year (3). This means that Japan's output that year comprised about 65% of the world production of animated programmes and films (Ahn 3).

⁸⁶ However, Patrick Drazen points out that it is both deceptive and unfair to speak of Miyazaki as the only creative force at Studio Ghibli (254). Other key directors at Ghibli include Isao Takahata (*The Cat Returns*, 2002) and Yoshifumi Kondo (*Whisper of the Heart*, 1995).

⁸⁷ Despite Miyazaki's antipathy towards Disney, Buena Vista, the film division of Disney's empire, acquired rights to a number of his works in 1996 (Ritter 1). The contract stipulated that Disney could not change a frame. But there was no objection to dubbing into English, because of course all animation is dubbed into even its source language (Ebert 2).

Yet Christine Hoff Kraemer suggests that whereas Disney films tend to affirm existing cultural values, Miyazaki's "perform a complicated dance between performing Japanese cultural values and destabilising them" (n.p.). It seems that this "complicated dance" is especially true of Miyazaki's female characters, who regularly transgress bounds of what is seen as traditionally Japanese.⁸⁸

According to Hoff Kraemer, despite the continuing rigidity of gender roles in Japan, nearly all Miyazaki films feature strong, intelligent, independent heroines who "put supposedly feminist characters such as Disney's Pocahontas and Mulan to shame" (n.p.). Indeed, Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995: dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991: Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise), *The Little Mermaid* and *Mulan* uniformly imply that the acquisition of a man is crucial to the female protagonists' self-realisation – albeit that *Pocahontas* is in the end forced to separate from hers. However, Miyazaki's heroines in no way require boys in order to achieve selfhood, and for the most part there are only hints at potential love interest: for example in Kiki's eventual friendship with Tombo. Even in *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, where the ending shows Asbel whirling Nausicaä in the air, there is no sense of this liaison having been central to the film's trajectory, nor essential to Nausicaä's development as leader of her people.



Figures 38 and 39: Ariel and Prince Eric in *The Little Mermaid*;
Mulan and Prince Li Shang in *Mulan*

⁸⁸ One deviation from Japanese culture is Kiki's leaving home at the age of thirteen. This would be highly unusual in Japan, where many young women on average stay at home far longer than their western counterparts (Kavanagh 1). So the distinctions between Japan and the rest of the world are subtly undermined through Kiki's atypical behaviour and unusually open exploration of identity.

Peter Ritter argues that Disney's milieu is the coming-of-age tale, "in which a child takes tentative first steps into the world of doubt and fear and responsibility": in this world there is "personified evil" to overcome, and the child must learn to "dissemble and conquer" (n.p.). However, Ritter sees childhood in the world of Disney as being "a sort of larval stage, where children are shorter, snider versions of their adult selves" (n.p.). This evaluation surely holds true of *The Little Mermaid* and *Mulan*, where the child characters are emotionally indistinguishable from adult characters. However, Disney's defence, these characters are ostensibly older than Miyazaki's *shōjo* protagonists, in being young women on the brink of marriage. Nonetheless, they are presented as dependents who still live at home, under parental law: thus their narratives, like those of Miyazaki's *shōjo* characters, revolve around their seeking of autonomy. In a sense, their rites of passage seem inevitable, and their transformations not as extreme as those of Miyazaki's *shōjo* characters. Ariel of *The Little Mermaid* knows what she wants from the beginning, to enter the human world and meet her prince. Mulan is seemingly her own person from the start, and much of her battle seems to be in convincing others of her worth. There is simply not the same degree of "search within".

Moreover, Ritter believes that Miyazaki goes further in capturing the spirit of childhood:

Miyazaki evokes childhood's never-never land as it truly is... wondrous, sometimes frightening, but never childish. Childhood is serious business for children; that Miyazaki treats it as such makes his films resonate for both adults and young audiences. (n.p.)

I see Disney, like Miyazaki, as being concerned with blending fantasy and psychological realism; yet in accomplishing this, Miyazaki's work does seem more evocative of the child's perspective. In *My Neighbour Totoro* we slip elegantly back and forth between the mundane and the imaginative, and crucially, the imaginative elements are rooted in a child's psychological reality. Right from the film's start, we accept that it is the girls' wariness of the dark, and of new places, that lets them believe that the house is haunted by dust-bunnies.



Figures 40 and 41: The dust bunnies of *My Neighbour Totoro* (left) are echoed by the soot sprites in *Spirited Away* (right)

Talbot sees *My Neighbour Totoro* as a “radical film” in its melding of the gentle, magical environment with a subtle psychological treatment of the children’s anxiety over their mother (“The Auteur of *Anime*” 68). When Mei learns that her mother won’t be coming home for a visit as planned, her grief takes the form of a howling tantrum. Talbot points out that by way of contrast, in Disney movies, children weep decorously or break into poignant song (“The Auteur of *Anime*” 68). She sees Miyazaki as a master at conveying emotions as a child would experience them: “obliquely, often physically, with a thread of magical thinking that promotes resilience” (“The Auteur of *Anime*” 68).

It is Miyazaki’s ability to evoke the emotions of the child in tangible terms, and his use of psychological realism in conjunction with the fantastic, which this chapter aims to explore. For, as indicated above, in *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Kiki’s Delivery Service* and *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki tells of young girls who achieve self-realisation specifically through fantastical journeys that double as the psychological processes of growing up.

5.3 Why girls?

In “Spirited Away by Miyazaki’s Fantasy”, Mick Broderick points out that, in western cinema, the rite of passage is a subject more frequently represented as being a male domain, whereas Miyazaki chiefly traces the trajectory of girls from childhood to adulthood (2). In doing so, Miyazaki draws heavily on the notion of *shōjo* culture. According to Napier, the term *shōjo* quite literally

means “little female” (“From Akira” 118). Whereas it originally referred to girls around the ages of twelve and thirteen, Napier indicates that the term has gradually taken on a new meaning:

[The term] has become a shorthand for a certain kind of liminal identity between child and adult, characterised by a supposedly innocent eroticism based on sexual immaturity, a consumer culture of buying “cute” (*kawaii*) goods, and a wistful privileging of a past or free-floating form of nostalgia. (118)

Tamae Prindle endorses this idea of a liminal identity – proposing that what fascinates the Japanese is that the *shōjo* “nestle in a shallow lacuna between adulthood and childhood, power and powerlessness, awareness and innocence as well as masculinity and femininity” (cited in Freiberg 1).

Napier stresses that *shōjo* is an extremely elastic term and that it is ambiguous at which point on the continuum the *shōjo* ends and the more adult female begins: whereas Miyazaki's young girls are indubitably *shōjo* in terms of their age and general innocence, some of them are moving out of their liminal state toward a sense of identity as mature human beings (“From Akira” 119). Clearly Satsuki and Chihiro, both ten-years-old, occupy the more liminal zone, whereas Kiki at age thirteen is moving fast towards adulthood and finding her own vocation. However, Kiki, like Satsuki and Chihiro, is still within the state of transformation that is so fascinating about the *shōjo* character. Thus Miyazaki sets all three on fantastical journeys that articulate their internal changes.

“Why Boys?” is Miyazaki's first reaction when asked why he principally uses girl characters, before going on to elaborate:

The reason I present the hero as a girl is probably because society traditionally accords control to man, in Japan and in the rest of the world. We've reached a time when this male-

oriented way of thinking is reaching a limit. The girl or woman has more flexibility. (cited in Brophy 1)

In Thomas Lamarre's view, Miyazaki accords this flexibility to the fact that girl characters disrupt certain narrative conventions and expectations (350). Miyazaki sees action narratives as conventionally entailing a simple resolution, in which the defeat of the villain solves all problems; whereas with a girl as the lead, things do not close so totally: instead, one obstacle is overcome at a time, and the heroine continues on with that knowledge (Lamarre 350-1).

Notably in *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Kiki's Delivery Service* there are simply no villains. Talbot argues that Miyazaki's malevolent characters prove capable of a kind of "shape-shifting", which allows them to reveal a different facet of themselves (67). This is certainly the case for the witch Yubaba in *Spirited Away*, who is revealed in the end to have a benevolent side. In Talbot's view, the absence of villains makes for a "refreshing absence of perfect and perfectly pretty heroines, their lives arching toward romance" (67). Chihiro at the start of *Spirited Away* is a whining brat. And even when she starts to stand on her own feet she is periodically wracked with misery, as well as proving herself ingenious and brave. In creating what are essentially ordinary female characters, Miyazaki empowers girls in the audience, in allowing them to envisage themselves as resourceful and heroic. Maybe it's also reassuring that flawed girls can develop their own inner resources. In this sense Miyazaki does "make-over films" whereas Disney heroines are always already princess-heroines of some sort: they just need the narrative to showcase, reveal and reward their pre-existing virtues.

Although Miyazaki's films are not populated with irredeemable villains, the heroines do face obstacles, which for the most part crop up in an episodic fashion. Chihiro is able to partly win over Yubaba before she carries on with the next phase in her quest, returning an item to Yubaba's twin sister and, in turn, pacifying her too. That successfully achieved, Chihiro has to answer a riddle, enabling her parents' re-conversion from pigs, and her own return to the world as she knows it. So the quest is constructed from distinct episodes

rather than by working as a grand trajectory centred on the defeat of an antagonist. Crucially, the metaphoric battles that precede closure are internal ones, rather than being directed at external antagonists.

5.4 Realms of the fantastic

Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment* famously claims that in fairy tales, “internal processes are externalised and become comprehensible as represented by the figures of the story and its events” (25). Miyazaki is a modern creator of complex and intriguing animated tales that do precisely this – externalise the inner processes of their predominantly adolescent female protagonists. However, unlike fairytales, Miyazaki’s films do not always take their magical worlds for granted; instead his characters often occupy a space between the natural and the supernatural realms. In this sense, much of his work sits more comfortably within the fantasy genre as defined by Tzvetan Todorov, who saw fantasy as describing worlds which differ from our own in ways that can neither be explained wholly as natural nor as supernatural (25). “Once we choose one genre or the other,” says Todorov, “we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous” (25). Nonetheless, Miyazaki’s fantasies do draw on the marvellous genre of fairytale in many of their motifs, for instance in his setting of tasks that a character must complete. In this sense, Bettelheim’s theories are valuable in considering the possible impact of Miyazaki’s work on child audiences.

Miyazaki treats the fantasy realm through different constructions across his oeuvre. In *My Neighbour Totoro*, the real and magical worlds are not discrete realms, but rather enjoy a large degree of interpenetration. In a scene reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland*, Mei follows a White Rabbit-like Totoro creature, and falls down a hole between the camphor tree roots. However, although the viewer is pulled from the real world into a strange realm of forest creatures, the film never loses touch with the real. Rather than being confined to the space beyond the portal of the hole, Totoro repeatedly enters the prosaic realm – for instance making an appearance at the local bus stop. In hovering so elusively between the real and the marvellous, the story is a

classic fantasy narrative. For the audience remains uncertain as to whether the fantastic realm with which the children interact is imaginative or supernatural.

What is clear is that the realm with which the children engage is closely associated with nature. The Totoros' hiding place is situated beneath the roots of a camphor tree, and their gift of seeds is the means for the magical growth of another giant tree. Interestingly, the camphor tree is also the site of a Shinto shrine – Shinto being Japan's indigenous, animist religion. However, McCarthy holds that *My Neighbour Totoro's* plot deliberately sidelines religion in favour of nature, arguing that because it is set in Japan, the trappings of religious tradition are clearly visible, but as far as the plot is concerned, they're decorative, not functional (122). However, I would contend that religion is not completely sidelined: for example, the girls' father takes them to pay respects to the shrine after Mei first sees the Totoro. Antonia Levi suggests that in *My Neighbour Totoro*, Miyazaki turns to Shinto as a starting point, with the children's discovery of the shrine beneath the camphor tree; but that during the course of the story, the tree goes far beyond Shinto animism – becoming the centre for a fantasy world in which the Totoros introduce the girls to “the world of nature and magic and hope” (40).

Notably, the girls' mother is in hospital for a lengthy stay, and they enter the fantasy world as a space of comfort. This new space, then, is a direct outcome of their emotional crisis – and in this sense the fantastic is inextricably linked to Satsuki and Mei's states of mind. According to Napier, the idea that the fantastic allows even very young children to take care of themselves psychologically in times of disturbance is implicit in *My Neighbour Totoro* (*From Akira* 127). Furthermore, she maintains that whether the viewer believes in a natural or supernatural explanation, the characters' ability to connect with the Other – be it the unconscious or the supernatural – is clearly coded as a sign of inner strength and mental health (*From Akira* 127). Not unusually, this ability to connect with the Other is presented in *My Neighbour Totoro* as the exclusive preserve of children.

In connecting with the Other, Satsuki and Mei switch seamlessly from a world of reality to one of fantasy. Mariano Prunes sees such effortlessness in crossing borders as the result of telling the story from the point of view of children (54). Certainly, focalisation is a strategy used extensively in order to channel the magical visions through the children's eyes, for instance when Mei sees the small Totoros for the first time. (See *Clip 1, Chapter 5* on DVD.) She finds a bucket with its bottom missing, and lifting it to her eyes, spots an acorn trail that leads her on her way: in this way the broken bucket serves as a frame for her first magical encounter.

Similarly, Satsuki's first meeting with the giant Totoro is portrayed through a sequence of specifically framed point of view shots. (See *Clip 2, Chapter 5* on DVD.) A section of umbrella that takes up half the screen partially blocks her view, and in turn ours, when suddenly beneath its rim appears a large claw. We cut back to Satsuki's surprised face, then to her framed point of view, before cutting to an objective three-shot of Totoro, Satsuki and Mei. The whole subsequent sequence could then be construed as subjective precisely because we are led into it through focalisation – and so the ambiguity inherent in the fantasy genre is maintained.



Figure 42: We finally cut to an objective three-shot of Totoro, Satsuki and Mei.

The recurring dream motif in *My Neighbour Totoro* reinforces the uncertainty as to how the story's events might be interpreted. The first time Mei encounters the Totoro, she falls asleep on his furry stomach, and when she awakes, there is no sign of him – and no sign of the hole between the tree roots through which she fell. It is as if the fantasy realm has been wholly erased, and in her waking up there is the implicit suggestion that “it was all a dream”. However, she firmly believes her experience was real, and when her father and Satsuki laugh at the story, she bursts into indignant tears. Her

father quickly insists that he believes her, without any discernible patronisation. Because of his serious attitude, and Satsuki's correspondent belief in her sister's story, we too are not able to dismiss Mei's experience as mere dream – and so the fantasy genre's signature ambivalence remains intact. Talbot argues that in fact the film is focused on “dignifying the girls' imaginations, honouring their ability to partake in a fantasy that is both comforting and fortifying” (“The Auteur of *Anime*” 68).



Figure 43: Mei falling asleep on the Totoro's furry stomach

The dream analogy is again evoked when Satsuki and Mei are awoken by the Totoros dancing around the patch of earth where the girls planted seeds. The sisters join in the fertility ritual, and the seeds at once shoot up into an enormous camphor tree. Satsuki and Mei then fly through the night sky on the belly of the giant Totoro. Finally, an image of the girls with the Totoros up in the camphor tree fades to black – before fading up to the girls waking up on their futons. The juxtaposition of images implies the waking from a dream, and indeed they themselves cry, “It was a dream!” before noticing that their seeds have indeed sprouted, and delighting, “But it wasn't a dream!” Once again – in accordance with Todorov's definition of fantasy – our position and theirs as to the nature of the event is rendered ambivalent.



Figures 44 and 45: Satsuki taking part in a fertility rite;
Satsuki and Mei in the camphor tree

Whereas *My Neighbour Totoro* takes place in an ordinary world that becomes infused with fantasy, *Kiki's Delivery Service* is set in a city that maintains a close relationship with the world as we know it – complete with telephones and motorcars – but which from the start has some singular differences. The unhesitant presentation of supernatural elements, for instance Kiki's being a flying witch, situates the film firmly within the genre of the marvellous, rather than that of the fantastic.⁸⁹ However, in *The Art of Kiki's Delivery Service*, Miyazaki points out that apart from their ability to fly, witches in Kiki's world are not much more talented than normal girls (1). Kiki's close alliance with normal adolescents is crucial to Miyazaki's premise – namely that teenagers need to discover their own talents. And Kiki's inner journey is at its core not unusual: like most adolescents her struggle is one to gain confidence and to achieve independence.

McCarthy views the central thesis of *Kiki's Delivery Service* as being that action and excitement are only one part of independent life, and points out that very few films for young people show that “sometimes things are just plain dull for everyone, even people with magical powers” (154). There is a pertinent scene in which Kiki is on duty in the empty bakery, waiting listlessly ♫chin on hand. (See *Clip 3, Chapter 5* on DVD.) Outside the shop, a glamorous fashion designer glides nonchalantly by, and Kiki sighs wistfully, longing for a life beyond the mundane. Kiki might have supernatural talents, but this does not save her from the boredom and angst of day-to-day existence. In this way, Miyazaki treats the marvellous not as a realm removed from real life, but as an element suffusing everyday existence.

Perhaps of the three films under discussion, *Spirited Away* most patently fulfils the three conditions for fantasy as outlined by Todorov. His first requirement is that the text should oblige the reader to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events described (33). Second, the reader's experience is linked to that of the character, who should similarly experience this hesitation (33). Third, the reader should adopt a certain

⁸⁹ Jackson points out that in the genre of the marvellous, the character and the viewer are transported into an absolutely different, alternative world, a “secondary” universe, as Auden and Tolkien term it (cited in Jackson 42). This secondary duplicated cosmos is, according to Jackson, relatively autonomous, relating to the “real” only through metaphorical reflection and never, or rarely, intruding into or interrogating it (42).

attitude with regard to the text, rejecting allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations (33). Notably, Todorov refers to "the reader", not to the audience/spectator, assuming that fantastic narratives are literary. However, the narrative theory of the fantastic applies equally to cinematic texts, as demonstrated by James Donald, who in his introduction to *Fantasy and the Cinema* presents Todorov's theory in relation to film (10-21).

A close viewing of a scene near the start of *Spirited Away* demonstrates Chihiro's ambivalence as to the nature of her experience. (See *Clip 4, Chapter 5* on DVD.) Having left her parents gorging themselves on delicacies, she gazes across at an enormous bathhouse. Ghostly spirits begin to materialise around her, and she cries out for her mother and father, before racing back to the portal to the human world – only to discover an ocean now blocks her way. When a steamboat approaches, Chihiro cries: "It can't be... I'm dreaming, dreaming! Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!" Yet the ship continues to approach. "It's just a dream," she cries, "It's just a dream... go away, disappear... disappear." She is shocked as her hands become transparent, and soon she herself begins to fade away.



Figure 46: Chihiro's transparent hands in *Spirited Away*

Rosemary Jackson points out that an emphasis upon invisibility points to one of the central thematic concerns of the fantastic, namely problems of vision (45). She believes that since we equate the "real" with the "visible", "the unreal" becomes that which is "in-visible" (45). Chihiro clearly equates invisibility with unreality as she again cries, "I can see through! It's a dream, it's got to be." The ship lands, and when spirits in the form of floating playing cards emerge, Chihiro cries out and runs off. Later she is given a red pill to swallow to regain her opacity, and by the time she has lost her

transparency – and her corresponding sense of doubt – we are drawn entirely into the fantastical realm. By Todorov's definition, it is Chihiro's very hesitancy as she enters this realm, and our parallel ambivalence as viewers, which helps to establish the story within the fantastic genre.

5.5 Fantasy motifs

Besides invisibility, the fantasy genre incorporates a number of diverse themes. For one, Rosemary Jackson discusses “duplicity and multiplicity of selves” (45). In *Spirited Away*, there is the use of the *doppelgänger* motif in the witch Yubaba's twin sister Zeniba, opposite to her in temperament and representing her alter ego.



Figures 47 and 48: The witch Yubaba and her twin sister Zeniba in *Spirited Away*

There is also duplicity in the initially gentle spirit creature called No Face,⁹⁰ whom Chihiro lets enter the bathhouse, only to have him wreak havoc as he devours everything in his path. Yet, once out of the bathhouse, he is complacent again, as if his very entry into the spirits' sanctuary renders him duplicitous.

Linked to duplicity is another familiar fantasy device: that of metamorphosis or transformation, which Rosemary Jackson identifies as one of the “primary pleasures” of the fantasy mode – with its stress upon instability of natural forms (81). In *Spirited Away*, Yubaba's oversized baby morphs into a mouse, and her bird familiar into a buzzing insect. There is also the transformation of

⁹⁰ No Face's blank visage recalls a Noh mask from the Japanese theatre tradition.

Chihiro's parents into pigs – echoing that of Odysseus' men on Circe's island (Osmond 2).

Drazen points out that in *My Neighbour Totoro*, the girls' names in themselves suggest a type of duality: “Satsuki” is the old Japanese name for the fifth month and “Mei” suggests the English month of May (264). Tellingly, Miyazaki's original story featured one little girl, not two (Drazen 264-5). In a sense, Mei represents the older Satsuki's longing to cling to childhood. When the two girls enter the hospital and greet their mother, Mei flings herself impulsively into her arms; whereas Satsuki hangs back, less spontaneous, but clearly longing to be so. Her little sister represents that from which Satsuki is moving away.

Similarly, the title of *Spirited Away* in Japanese – *Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* – is a pun that points to a duality: for “Sen” is another way of pronouncing the first character in the name “Chihiro” (Drazen 276). When the witch Yubaba takes Chihiro into her employ, she takes away the name Chihiro. This is visually shown by making the letters of the name vanish, leaving behind only the one pronounced as Sen. Yubaba then declares Sen to be Chihiro's new name. In *The Purpose of the Film*, Miyazaki claims that the act of depriving someone of their name is not just changing how one person calls the other, but is rather a way to rule the other person completely (1). It is through her resistance to being ruled that Chihiro manages to grow into a fuller person – signified by her regaining her full name at the film's end. Rachel Manija Brown points out that Chihiro's name change gives a nod to every name-magic fantasy from *Rumpelstiltskin* to *A Wizard of Earthsea*: she can't leave until she gets her real name back (2). In that Chihiro needs to regain her name to return to her life, her name is inextricably linked to her identity. It is this identity search on the part of adolescent girls that Miyazaki is particularly interested in exploring through fantasy.

Miyazaki has indeed referred to the importance of fantasy in his work, but also points to the problematic aspects of the term as he understands it:

We shouldn't stick too close to everyday reality but give room to the reality of the heart, of the mind and of the imagination.

Those things can help us in life. But we have to be cautious in using this word fantasy. In Japan, the word fantasy these days is applied to everything from TV shows to video games, like virtual reality. But virtual reality is a denial of reality. (cited in Mes 4)

Miyazaki, thus, sees fantasy as being inextricably linked to emotional realism. His point is that an unrelenting focus on creating an illusion of reality is likely to detract from core emotional truth.

One could argue that Miyazaki disguises actuality to some extent, in order that his stories may be open to personal imaginative interpretation. At the same time, it is Miyazaki's refusal to deny reality, and his careful balance between real and imagined worlds, which so strongly situates much of his work within the fantasy genre. For as Rosemary Jackson puts it, "the fantastic exists in the hinterland between 'real' and 'imaginary', shifting the relations between them through its indeterminacy" (35). Chihiro's experience, for one, is utterly indeterminable: the world she enters is manifested through a high level of realistic detail, yet the viewer is never granted surety as to whether it should be understood as dream or reality – and therein lies the fantastic.

It seems that because the fantastic exists in a locus between the real and the imaginary, it is a genre that is specifically suited to conveying the inner journeys of Miyazaki's *shōjo* characters. In its partial removal from quotidian reality, fantasy is able to access inner processes and to express the inexpressible. Yet at the same time, the fantastical genre, in its distance from the unambiguously marvellous, retains a relationship with the real and the capacity to convey psychological truths. In engaging with fantasy to express psychological truth, Miyazaki creates worlds that are physical manifestations designed to reflect and address the protagonists' eminently real inner needs, challenges and emotional states.

5.6 Purpose-built worlds

According to Napier, Miyazaki's heroines are the conduits through which Miyazaki's magical alternative realities are mediated. She describes the girls as "idealised guides helping the viewer understand and imaginatively participate in Miyazaki's distinctive and defamiliarising vision of the real" ("From Akira" 124). While I do not disagree with Napier's analysis, it could be conversely argued that Miyazaki's "defamiliarised visions of the real" are purposefully constructed to render cinematic the characters' inner journeys, and allow the viewer to participate imaginatively in their rites of passage.

In each of Miyazaki's films this process of transformation is directly linked to his particular choice of imagined world. In *Kiki's Delivery Service*, the unknown city of Koriko provides a metaphorical setting for Kiki's coming of age. The city presents a series of ordeals: Kiki has to live with strangers, find her way around, and engage with more assertive teenagers as well as with a boy who has a crush on her. And for the first time she needs to fend for herself financially. The setting may be an imagined city and Kiki a witch with the power of flight, yet within this fantastical realm Miyazaki explores eminently real obstacles and emotions. It seems, in fact, that the city of Koriko, with all the new experiences it offers, stands for the uncharted terrain of the teenage years.



Figures 49 and 50: Kiki charting the unknown city of Koriko, and dealing with more assertive teenagers in *Kiki's Delivery Service*.

In the opening scene of *Spirited Away*, Chihiro complains about moving towns, and also that the only bouquet of flowers she has ever been given is wilting. When her mother points out that her father gave her a rose for her

birthday, Chihiro whines that that was a single flower – not a bouquet. The bathhouse then becomes an apt site of transformation, in which she is able both to overcome her dread of moving and also to face onerous tasks that help her to grow beyond her spoiled-brat status.

In order to provide cinematic equivalents for stages of his characters' inner transformations, Miyazaki employs visual elements of colour, space and movement in the construction of his worlds. McCarthy points out that the colour palette of *Kiki's Delivery Service* is predominantly "summery", and that when darker tones creep in, they fulfil a very specific story function, darkening the mood to one of foreboding (156). She cites the velvet blue of the night sky for Kiki's departure, the ominous depth of the pine forest around Ursula's cabin, and the rain-slashed skies of Kiki's worst flights – which "offer either a delicious foreboding of the unknown or the awful anticipation of fear and failure" (156-7). In a similar sense, the fiery sunset colours at the climax of *My Neighbour Totoro*, when Satsuki goes searching for her missing sister, not only indicate that night is falling and danger increasing, but also reflect Satsuki's enflamed and tumultuous state of mind at this point of her inner journey. The growing shadows on the ground further strengthen our sense of Satsuki's foreboding. (See *Clip 5, Chapter 5* on DVD.)

Space is similarly used to signify changes in emotional growth: for instance, there is a metaphoric contrast between Kiki's home village and the city of Koriko. McCarthy points out that as Kiki's world widens with her new experiences, so her new surroundings offer more challenges and potential than the peaceful country home she left behind (157). Similarly, the spatial layout of the bathhouse in *Spirited Away* reflects the convoluted state of Chihiro's mind. There are a multitude of levels, long passages, and endless twists and turns; and when Chihiro is in the depths of despair, it is to the crowded basement furnace that she has to descend.

It is useful to compare Miyazaki's use of other worlds with the duality of realms in *The Little Mermaid*. According to Laura Sells, Disney's film establishes the world on land and the world under the sea as two contrasting spaces, wherein the world of the land is factual and the one of the sea fictive

(177). Unusually perhaps, the protagonist Ariel comes from the fictive world, and longs to enter the "real" realm, which could be read as standing for adulthood. Yet, the film begins with a scene of sailors dancing on a ship: and so the upper world is established as our prior reference point in terms of "reality". Sells sees the two-world motif as creating permeable yet dangerous borders, as furthering the plot, and as establishing a hierarchy of desires (178).

The dualistic, hierarchical construction of worlds in *The Little Mermaid* highlights the fact that there are no such distinct, contradictory realms in Miyazaki's work – that is, in terms of two spaces geographically as well as metaphysically separated, with a permeable border that can be traversed at will. In *My Neighbour Totoro* there is inter-penetration between the magical and prosaic worlds. In *Kiki's Delivery Service*, the world as we know it includes within its bounds elements that are marvellous. We are introduced at the start to a family of witches, who live alongside ordinary neighbours. Kiki does traverse space in that she travels to Koriko, but the city, like her hometown, is not a flagrantly magical realm, but is in keeping with the film's internal logic. Witches, although unusual, are accepted as members of society, who are expected to pay traffic fines should their broomsticks disrupt the traffic.

Spirited Away, in its use of parallel realms, comes closest to the dualistic construction of *The Little Mermaid*. Chihiro leaves the ordinary world behind when she enters through the tunnel into an otherworldly realm. She only returns to her own world at the film's conclusion. Yet the spirit world is not purposefully sought out, but merely stumbled upon: Chihiro is literally "spirited away", as it were, to find herself at a remove from the "real" world, though little geographical space has been traversed.

So, in *Spirited Away* there is a dualism between the real and spirit realms, but the borders are not permeable at will. In *My Neighbour Totoro* a magical realm exists within the recognisable world. *Kiki's Delivery Service* establishes an internally coherent world with marvellous elements. In all three cases there is a meeting between the mundane and the magical: Miyazaki draws on highly realistic elements to establish internally coherent worlds that reflect in their construction the characters' rites of passage.

5.7 Realism in the service of fantasy

In creating worlds that speak authentically to our experience, Miyazaki roots his films firmly in the aesthetically real. Talbot sees Miyazaki as making “the details of the world he creates concrete and coherent, so that we might better suspend our disbelief for the big leaps of fantasy” (69). According to Prunes, Miyazaki constructs worlds where both real and unreal events are likely to take place: “Every detail is so lovingly rendered, so seductive in what one could call historical plausibility, so as to make us accept any incursions into the supernatural as a logical consequence of the environment” (48).

There is an intriguing scene in the documentary on the *Spirited Away* DVD, showing Miyazaki's young colleagues visiting a vet's practice. (See *Clip 6, Chapter 5* on DVD.) In order accurately to animate the way in which the dragon character drools, the animators record the way the saliva spills over a dog's canines. This level of observation goes towards creating a magical world that is exceptionally convincing. Conceivably, realistic aesthetic detail heightens the fantasy, and makes tangibly concrete Miyazaki's imagined worlds. As Mark Schilling puts it, Miyazaki's style combines free-form *fantasy with a meticulously observed reality*: “His animals talk and his children fly, but they perform these miracles in a world where windows stick and the heroine catches cold in the rain” (“*Majo delivers*” 1).

Moreover, the visceral, experiential feel of Miyazaki's films heightens the viewer's identification with the setting and its events. Miyazaki situates us right inside the protagonists' experiences, thereby locating the viewer deeply within the fantasy worlds and aligning us with the characters' journeys. For instance, we share with Chihiro the vertiginous sensation as she climbs down the outside of the bathhouse, and plunges down the precipitous steps. (See *Clip 7, Chapter 5* on DVD.) We panic with her, feeling that we are really there. Paradoxically, the bathhouse is so convoluted and architecturally improbable that it simply could never have been constructed as a set and have still retained its unearthly quality. *Anime* as a medium allows for experiential, rather than actual, realism.



Figure 51: Visceral vertigo as Chihiro makes her way down the outside of the bathhouse in *Spirited Away*

Miyazaki not only creates realism through careful detailing, and character identification through visceral experience, but he also rigorously explores emotional truth – especially around the process of growing up. Using rather loaded terms, Miyazaki insists that although the world of *Spirited Away* was a fabrication, he “didn’t lie”. “The worst movies,” he claims, “are those that lie to you while pretending to show you real life. Kids know that is a lie. I’m dealing with real issues” (cited in Adilman 1).

However, Donald Richie contends that there is absolutely nothing real in *anime*, and argues that in this way, Japanese *anime* could be seen as the “quintessential Japanese product”:

Animated cartoons are pure presentation, nothing actual or real is allowed near them... Perhaps that is the reason *anime* are so fast, and so violent, that they have to make themselves apprehendable through splash alone. (cited in Ruh 1).

Such an outright dismissal of anime is clearly misplaced. Whereas some anime may well reflect Richie’s description, there is a wide range of genres presented in anime – including realistic psychological drama. Although Miyazaki, for one, works within science fiction and fantasy genres, his stories are firmly rooted in psychological realism. I would go so far as to suggest that it is the very fantasy of the settings that throws Miyazaki’s characters’ emotions into sharp relief. For the stakes are upped through the sheer intensity of situations that the fantastical settings provide, while there is no interference with the core emotional truth of his protagonists’ inner journeys.

5.8 Inner journeys

Every one of Miyazaki's narratives – from the epic spectacle of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* to the deceptively simple *My Neighbour Totoro* – involves an emotional voyage, and certainly much of the literature on Miyazaki evokes the journey motif. Broderick claims that Miyazaki's fantastical journeys “simultaneously illustrate an internal, emotional voyage as much as the external exploration depicts familiar and alien terrains” (2), while Elizabeth Vincentelli describes Miyazaki as a “humanist concerned with rites of passage and periods of transition” (cited in McCarthy 154).

These rites of passage involve what Bettelheim refers to as “achieving integration”, which he defines as “the symbolic struggle of personality integration against chaotic disintegration” (76). Bettelheim believes that in order to cope, “one must develop one’s inner resources, so that one’s emotions, imagination and intellect mutually support and enrich one another” (4). Bettelheim also asserts that a child can only find selfhood by “going out into the world” (11), which is precisely what each of Miyazaki’s heroines do. Satsuki's achievement of integration involves her learning to cope with her mother's illness – a process made possible through her interaction with the Totoro, in whom she and her younger sister seek solace. Kiki's emergence as a self-sufficient young woman is described through her witch's internship in a new city. Chihiro achieves integration by working in a bathhouse in the spirit realm, so moving beyond the self-pity she felt back in her own world. Each of these transformative journeys externalises at every turn the inner processes that the characters need to undergo.

Significantly, *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Spirited Away* all involve a move to a new home, which represents internal changes that need to take place within the protagonist. Their transformations are also precipitated by separation from family. Napier points out that *My Neighbour Totoro*'s plot begins with a move from city to country due to the illness of the family's mother, while *Kiki*'s narrative begins with her leaving home to spend a year in a strange city (127). Similarly, in *Spirited Away*, Chihiro loses her

parents, albeit temporarily, in that they are transformed into pigs. This loss of family security is central to the characters' journeys to self-integration.

In many fairytales, according to Bettelheim, being pushed out of the home stands for having to become oneself:

Self-realisation requires leaving the orbit of the home, an excruciatingly painful experience fraught with many psychological dangers. This developmental process is inescapable; the pain of it is symbolised by the children's unhappiness about being forced to leave home. (79)

McCarthy believes Satsuki knows that she must soon leave childhood behind, and is not entirely prepared to do so (124). Her dramatic question is whether or not she will be able to balance the magic and innocence of childhood with the responsibilities of growing up. Occasionally we see the shyness she experiences with early adolescence: for instance, she hesitates before accepting a ride through the sky from Totoro. Yet by the film's end, her interaction with the affirming force of Totoro has bolstered her to accept the responsibilities that come with growing up – while not denying her child-like side. Her unhesitant journey on the cat bus towards the film's end to find her baby sister shows that Satsuki has at last managed to integrate responsibility with a magical experience of the world.



Figure 52: Satsuki's unhesitant ride on the cat bus in *My Neighbour Totoro*

Kiki is just thirteen when she leaves home to embark on her witch's apprenticeship. She soon finds that her confidence is not as solid as she had believed. Her dramatic question is whether she will be able to regain her self-

assurance, and to gain a degree of autonomy. Miyazaki wrote the following in his foreword to *The Art of Kiki's Delivery Service*:

In an era when leaving the security of one's home is no longer anything special, and living among strangers means nothing more than going to a convenience store for anything you need, it might be more difficult than ever to achieve a real sense of independence since you must go through the process of discovering your own talents and expressing yourself. (n.p.)

Indeed, like most teenagers, Kiki's struggle is one to gain confidence and achieve independence. The magical journey is a vehicle for telling of very real teenage angst.

Schilling, writing in *The Japan Times*, points out that Miyazaki explores states usually considered the province of "live" movies: for instance, besides showing courage and spunk – "standard stuff for a cartoon heroine" – Kiki experiences boredom, depression and embarrassment ("*Majo delivers*" 1). In *Contemporary Japanese Film*, Schilling discusses the scene in which, after spending her first night at the home of the baker and his wife, Kiki wakes up, and still in her nightgown, steps outside to run to the outhouse ("*Contemporary Japanese Film*" 252). (See *Clip 8, Chapter 5* on DVD.) A few moments later, she peeps out and sees the baker stretching his muscles in the courtyard. The moment he is out of sight, Kiki scampers up the steps, dives into her room and shuts the door, breathing hard. Schilling points out that the scene does nothing to advance the plot and the humour is not immense, but that it eloquently expresses Kiki's youth, vulnerability and isolation: "For one clear moment, we see into the heart of an adolescent girl" ("*Contemporary Japanese Film*" 252). A Disney film would surely have dismissed the scene out of hand for not carrying the narrative forward. *Mulan* or *The Little Mermaid* barely contain a moment of lull: granted, there are moments when the narratives themselves grind to a halt in the song sequences, yet these are nevertheless a hurly burly of activity. But the space is granted in *Kiki's Delivery Service* simply to explore the awkwardness of staying in a strange place, and the adolescent's fear of the body.

Miyazaki externalises Kiki's emotions in less literal ways too. For instance, when she has a crisis of confidence, she loses her ability to fly – and her clumsy botched attempts at taking off from the ground cinematically demonstrate her loss of confidence. (See *Clip 9, Chapter 5* on DVD.) Through Kiki's relationship to flight, Miyazaki externalises her internal process, with flying becoming a visual metaphor for self-realisation. Her gift signifies her burgeoning life force – a gift she loses sight of temporarily in the throes of adolescent self-doubt. "I used to be able to fly without even thinking about it," Kiki says. "Now I'm trying to look inside myself to find out how I did it." Ultimately, Kiki discovers her own talents – regains her ability to fly – and achieves autonomy.



Figure 53: Burgeoning life force – Kiki in flight in *Kiki's Delivery Service*

Figure 54: Gaining courage – Satsuki and Mei in *My Neighbour Totoro*

Figure 55: Regaining identity – Chihiro with Haku in *Spirited Away*

Although neither Satsuki nor Chihiro have the ability to fly on their own, both embark on flights that provide key moments of change on their inner journeys. For Satsuki, flying with Totoro provides a necessary diversion from her anxiety about her ill mother, and gives her the courage to go on. And for Chihiro, it is in flight with the spirit Haku that she remembers her name, regains her sense of identity – and achieves self-integration. Miyazaki's penchant for flying may actually have a directly beneficial effect on child audiences. Bettelheim believes that by identifying with the fairytale hero, who has a body that can perform miraculous deeds, "any child can compensate in fantasy and through identification for all the inadequacies, real and imagined, of his own body" (57). Certainly identification with Miyazaki's heroines could be empowering for any child viewer on a number of levels: for whereas each of his *shōjo* characters begins her journey destitute and afraid, they all find their inner strength – their ability to fly, as it were – through hardship and struggle.

Spirited Away, like *Kiki's Delivery Service*, sees its protagonist having to deal with a move to a new town and with losing all that is familiar. Unlike the enthusiastic Kiki, Chihiro is terrified about being uprooted. Her move on a figurative level implies the need to move away from childhood – into the first stages of independence. As mentioned, Bettelheim asserts that in a fairy tale, internal processes are externalised in terms of the figures of the story (25). Certainly the figures Chihiro encounters force her to face her weaknesses, which have to do with her self-centredness and materialism. Appropriately then, in the bathhouse, she encounters a number of figures that represent conspicuous consumption. There is the Stink Spirit, who in a cleansing catharsis vomits forth piles of redundant goods. And there is the spirit No Face, who proffering unlimited gold coins, devours everybody in his path. Chihiro is tasked with pacifying both figures, and her diffusion of each crisis stands for her dealing with her own issues. The only reason that Chihiro avoids being eaten is that she does not take the gold that No Face offers as bait: her very shunning of consumption is her saving grace. Chihiro is also required to rescue her parents who are trapped in the spirit realm as pigs, due to their own gluttonous consumption of food. Perhaps Chihiro's own desire for more flowers in the film's exposition is a warning sign that she too is headed along this path – unless she outgrows her acquisitiveness and learns the value of the non-material.



Figures 56 and 57: Chihiro as whining brat at the start of *Spirited Away*, and dealing with No Face, shunning consumption

According to Bettelheim, the process of self-realisation involves psychological risks, which as always in fairy tales, "are represented by the dangers the hero encounters on his travels" (79). Initially Chihiro seems to succumb to the dangers, stumbling through the new world. She hurtles down precipitous

stairs and is magically yanked across hallways. Anthony Osmond suggests that her switch to active protagonist is signalled when "she finally hitches up her worker's uniform, runs along a treacherous metal pipe that nearly drops her to her doom, then climbs the bathhouse to the top" (2). From this point on, the overriding onus on Chihiro is to work and so prove herself.

Indeed, for Miyazaki, the coming-of-age is inextricably linked to the completion of tasks, which Bettelheim identifies as the cornerstone of many fairytales (77, 110). Sometimes the missions Miyazaki creates involve magical abilities such as flying, as in *Kiki's Delivery Service*. However, the characters in *My Neighbour Totoro* and *Spirited Away* are more ordinary girls, without special gifts. In fact, Miyazaki claims that for *Spirited Away*, in particular, he modified his approach:

Until now, I made "I wish there were such a person" leading characters. This time, however, I created a heroine who is an ordinary girl, someone with whom the audience can sympathise, someone about whom one can say, "Yes, it's like that". It's very important to make it plain and unexaggerated.
(cited in Broderick 2)

In making *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki was concerned that his character's tasks were not out of imaginable reach for his target audience. He explains that every time he wrote or drew something concerning Chihiro or her actions, he asked himself whether his friend's ten-year-old daughter or her friends would be capable of doing it, treating that as the criterion for every task, "for it's through surmounting these challenges that this little girl becomes a capable person" (cited in Mes 2).

Prunes believes that because Miyazaki's children are conceived as fully-fledged characters, they allow for universal audience identification, as well as for unquestioned access into the fantastic (54). Certainly, it seems that Miyazaki is crucially concerned with the identification of real children with his characters, and with empowering his viewers to become competent members of the world. Thus Miyazaki creates outer voyages that entertain

his child viewers while, at the same time, reflecting inner journeys with which they can unconsciously identify.

5.9 Conclusion

In undermining genre expectations, Miyazaki's *shōjo* characters offer narrative flexibility, allowing for stories of inner struggle rather than of combat with external opponents. The *anime* medium frees Miyazaki from the shackles of consensus reality, enabling him to create fantastical realms that would not be possible within the parameters of live-action filmmaking. Yet, Miyazaki draws on realism, both aesthetic and psychological, in order to draw his viewers into these worlds, which offer an internal logic: a kind of meta-reality. Moreover, these imagined realms – metaphors for the uncharted terrain of growing up – are constructed so as to throw his characters' needs and fears into sharp relief, helping to externalise their coming-of-age processes.

Bettelheim argues that fairytales promise a good life, despite adversity – “but only if one does not shy away from the hazardous struggles without which one can never achieve true identity” (24). Certainly Miyazaki's narratives, in drawing on fairytale motifs, present their *shōjo* characters with obstacles and tasks that allow them to grow and develop, and which have a resonance, in their core truth, for child audiences everywhere. And during their journeys, Miyazaki's characters encounter figures that stand for weaknesses they need to face to achieve self-integration.

Because Miyazaki's films are, despite their flights of fancy, rooted firmly in reality, they can have an impact on spectators that is eminently “real”, as they relate his stories to “real” personal and social problems. Satsuki, Kiki and Chihiro all embark on journeys and face problems with which the child viewer can vicariously identify, and in so doing gain the inspiration and courage to overcome the challenges of their own lives.

5.10 Implications for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*

My Neighbour Totoro, *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Spirited Away* encompass a number of themes and issues relevant to the project *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. Most obviously, Zinzi at age twelve is adolescent like Miyazaki's *shōjo* characters, and so Miyazaki's voyages of discovery provide some useful insights into the inner journey that Zinzi undergoes.

5.10.1 On the cusp

Zinzi and the Boondogle uses the classic fairytale device of the parent dying at the story's outset. This motif appears not only in traditional western tales such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White*, but in African tales such as *The Magic Fish Bones*, a Xhosa tale about a young girl called Nondwe, who loses her mother and has to deal with a step mother (Savory 46).⁹¹ Bettelheim writes that the fairy tale "confronts the child squarely with the basic human predicaments", and points out how many of these tales begin with the death of a parent, which "creates the most agonising problems, as it (or the fear of it) does in real life" (8).

Notably, Miyazaki's characters are orphaned in *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* and *Nausicaä: Valley of the Wind*. In the *shōjo* films I discuss, the parents do not die, but are nevertheless absent. The girls are left with a large degree of responsibility, which both hastens the onset of and raises the stakes for their self-realisation processes. In South Africa, with the prominence of HIV / Aids and the increasing numbers of child-headed households, the death of the parent has pertinent implications, and sets *Zinzi and the Boondogle* within the social reality. Yet, at the same time, the death of the parent is a motif firmly rooted within the fantasy tradition – signifying the moment at which a child embarks on a journey of self-realisation.

⁹¹ Sigrid Schmidt relates two tales from the Nama people of Namibia, in both of which a pair of children are orphaned (111-4). *The Singing Bone*, Schmidt writes, comes from the European oral tradition, while *The Faithless Sister* has its roots from oral European, American and Indian traditions (173-4). The influence presumably stems from German colonial occupation, but both stories have African traditions overlaid onto the original narratives. The point is that the motif of the orphaned child or children is seemingly universal.

Given that Zinzi has no parents and no financial resources, her situation is direr than that of Satsuki in *My Neighbour Totoro*, who has to take care of her younger sister while her mother is in the hospital. But degree of hardship aside, both Zinzi and Satsuki suffer internal conflicts that result from taking on responsibilities beyond their years. There is a correlation between Satsuki's hanging back while little Mei hugs their mother at the hospital, and Zinzi's reticence to embrace her mother on New Year's Eve, when all her other siblings are happily doing so. Zinzi, like Satsuki, is prematurely balanced on the cusp of womanhood, and so too shuns the impulse towards spontaneity and hides her need to be nurtured – however much she may crave it.

In a similar vein, Satsuki pauses before accepting Totoro's unspoken invitation to climb on his belly for a flight in the sky. Likewise, Zinzi should be bewildered by the magical elements that enter into her life. She greets the Boondogle's first arrival with incredulity – her burgeoning adult mind hardly accepting what her child eyes know to be true. This contrasts with her four-year-old sister Leila, who unquestioningly accepts winking lessons from the two-headed dog, just as little Mei needs no encouragement to climb onto Totoro's belly. Furthermore, Zinzi's moment of adolescent hesitation is crucial in situating the film more firmly within the fantasy genre, and allowing for both literal and figurative readings of the Boondogle himself.

Just as Satsuki is ultimately able to balance adult responsibility with a childlike, imaginative experience of the world, so too is it vital that Zinzi does not lose the child's magical perspective. Zinzi does in the end manage to keep her family intact, but it is integral to the film's message that she is also able to find joy in her life: for this reason she is depicted raucously celebrating with her siblings during the film's *denouement*.

5.10.2 Fantasy devices

In *Spirited Away*, Chihiro is stuck in the spirit realm until she can remember her name and answer a riddle. The attempt to recall a name echoes the woodcutter's daughter having to discover Rumpelstiltskin's name in order to

save her baby. *Zinzi and the Boondogle* adapts the challenge, in that Zinzi and her siblings have to find the place where their baby sister is hidden. As discussed, the solving of a name or riddle is a classic fantasy motif, and in fact, Miyazaki utilises the name search as a structuring device throughout *Spirited Away*, with Chihiro's quest standing for her identity search. Moreover, the bizarre riddle that Chihiro answers in order to rescue her parents, shows her eventual ability to engage with the spirit realm on its own magical terms. The implication is similar where Zinzi eventually addresses the Boondogle in rhyme: through engagement with his magic, Zinzi has mastered the rules of his world. In so doing, she has achieved self-integration, and is ready to move on.

Yet another fantasy device that comes into play throughout *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is the portal to another world, which in *Spirited Away* exists as a tunnel through which Chihiro enters the spirit realm. As mentioned in the addendum to Chapter 4, there are two portals in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*: the first is the muddled bead badge that Zinzi creates, and the second is the bead doll replicas of the children, through which they are transported into the Bead World. However, the children do not return via the dolls, given that these have just about unravelled by sunset. Instead, they use a magical ritual involving the animals' gifts in order to return. The fact that the children can return via another route is only possible because the other portal, namely the bead badge, has established a conflation of worlds that involves the Boondogle's two-way trafficking between the real and magical. Once the portal of the badge is open, the Boondogle is free to come and go as he pleases, and so the magical realm keeps penetrating the real one.

This inter-penetrative model is more similar to the scenario of *My Neighbour Totoro* than that of *Spirited Away*. For in *My Neighbour Totoro* there is no one distinct portal between worlds: even though Mei falls down a hole, this only takes her to another forest clearing. Granted, there she discovers the giant Totoro, but after this encounter the Totoro repeatedly appears in the forest "above", and is in no way restricted to a site of the marvellous beyond a portal. What this interpenetrative model suggests, which is also crucial for the meaning of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, is that magic exists within the prosaic world. In a sense, it is her discovery of magic within the gritty hardship of

her life that gives Zinzi the strength to go on. McCarthy underlines the self-same message in *My Neighbour Totoro*:

Mei and Satsuki are on a quest as compelling as any fantasy hero's journey; they are seeking the magic in their everyday world. The treasure they win will be the ability to find that magic, whatever circumstance or experience may hide it. (137)

However, magic is more two-edged in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*: on the one hand there is the Boondogle's malevolent trickster's power; but on the other there is Gogo's affirmative power and the comforting magic of the baboons, dolphins and eagles.

The power of the animals, in whom the children find solace, recalls Miyazaki's treatment of nature as magical in *My Neighbour Totoro*, a film that Prunes sees as exemplifying the "natural fantastic" or "pastoral fantastic" (54). While interacting with the animals, the children face tasks which involve overcoming their worst fears: Zinzi is forced to face her dread of water in travelling under the ocean; Sam who fears darkness has to enter a cave; and Vuyo who suffers from vertigo needs to clamber to the highest crag of Table Mountain. Overcoming these phobias stands for the children conquering their fears in a broader sense.

Through overcoming their fears and achieving their tasks, the children win the respect of the baboons, dolphins and eagles, who come to the children's aid through the gifts of fossil, feather and seawater, which prove vital to their mission. According to Bettelheim, helpful animals may be read as representing children's inner resources (76).⁹² Certainly, for Zinzi and her brothers, overcoming their fears involves accessing their inner strength, and is integrally connected to their interactions with the animals.

⁹² In discussing a fairy tale entitled *The Queen Bee*, Bettelheim discusses the youngest of three sons, called Simpleton – who would be incapable of mastering life, which is represented by the difficult tasks he has to perform, "except that he proves able to call for help on his inner resources, represented by the helpful animals" (76).

5.10.3 Projected figures

In the same vein, the Totoros may be viewed as symbolising Satsuki and Mei's inner resources, on which they draw to cope with their mother's absence. If one reads the Totoros as manifesting the desire for maternal comfort, then this magical realm may be seen as a projection of the unconscious. Notably, when Kiki loses her ability to fly, she also loses the ability to communicate with her cat, which could stand for her temporary disability to access her inner resources, or to deal with her unconscious fears. Similarly, Zinzi's inability at first to enter the ocean represents her psychological paralysis caused by fear – just as Kiki's incapacity to fly manifests her crisis of confidence.

Miyazaki creates his magical worlds in response to his *shōjo* characters' psychological needs; in the same way, the world of the Boondogle is a response to Zinzi's need – in presenting her with a means to overcome her fear. Just as Chihiro needs to contend with the Stink Spirit and No Face so that she can gain self-empowerment, so it is necessary that Zinzi wage battle with the Boondogle in order to discover her inner strength. The Boondogle may be read as Zinzi's fear made manifest – just as the Totoros may be seen as a projection of Satsuki and Mei's longing for maternal comfort. In *Twice-Told Tales: the Psychological Use of Fairy Tales*, Hans Dieckmann argues:

If we regard the fairy tale as an intrapsychic drama, then all the persons, actions, animals, places, and symbols appearing in the fairy tale represent the intrapsychic stirrings, impulses, attitudes, modes of experience and strivings. (88)

After this reading, the Boondogle can be seen as a part of herself that Zinzi must meet, and which she must ultimately withstand. The journey to finding Leila and conquering the Boondogle represents then a vital psychological process.

5.10.4 Colour and space

In furnishing cinematic equivalents for stages of the inner voyage, Miyazaki employs colour and space in ways that are worth considering in the execution of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. In *Kiki's Delivery Service*, darker hues are used to convey moments of foreboding or awful anticipation. What I would propose for *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is that the scenes in the children's tiny home – the locus of sadness and fear – are rendered sombre in lighting and colour key, reaching their darkest point at the moment that the Boondogle takes Leila away. By way of contrast, the journey to the animals takes place largely in natural daylight, with an emphasis on bright, natural colours.

However, the equation of fear with darkness will not be that straightforward, as the Boondogle, who stands for fear itself, always appears in a flash of light. Moreover, the Boondogle's Bead World is garishly bright – even psychedelic. Yet, the Bead World's colouring is disarmingly off-kilter: the trees are lime green, the sky turquoise and the sun blood-red – in contrast to the *naturally* bright colours of the sea, mountain and sky, which carry the positive associations of the animals.

Just as the emotional connotations of colour and lighting need to be employed in the service of the script, so it is important to connote emotions via space and locations. In *Kiki's Delivery Service*, the city of Koriko is densely populated and congested in comparison to the country home Kiki leaves behind, representing the complexity of the new life she needs to navigate – or in symbolic terms, of her emotional journey. Similarly, it is crucial that, as Zinzi and her brothers leave the cramped space of their one-roomed home, and head out on their quest, we convey the vastness of the natural world: the plummeting depths of the ocean, the soaring height of Table Mountain and the vast expanse of the sky that they explore in finally accessing their inner resources and overcoming their fears.

5.10.5 Empathy and focalisation

Finally, it is worth considering Miyazaki's combination of fantastic elements with carefully observed psychological realism, and further how he anchors his flights of fantasy to reality via meticulous aesthetic detail. It is essential for audience engagement that everything that happens to Zinzi – even if beyond the bounds of consensus reality – is both accurately rendered and contains emotional truth.

As far as aesthetic veracity is concerned, it is, for one, crucial that the Boondogle is carefully designed to reflect his animal components: I would recommend that the animators observe dolphins, baboons and eagles in action – just as Miyazaki's team observed a drooling dog in order to animate a dragon. This kind of attention to detail is critical for audience engagement. On the other hand, it is essential that biological accuracy does not overtake a sense of the Boondogle's "personality". The animators should focus on the "essence" of each component creature, rather than rendering them with zoological precision.

Concerning emotional truth: Zinzi's fear needs to be clearly aligned with the Boondogle. Her terror that precedes the Boondogle's every appearance can be systematically implied via the shot sequences. In shooting a trial scene while at the Binger Film Lab – that of the Boondogle's third visit – I opened with a close-up of the ticking clock showing 3h00, which tilts down to reveal Zinzi's anxious face, and pans across with her as she rushes to look at her mother's photo. As she shuts her eyes, we cut to a wide shot of the room, with Zinzi standing alone in the middle. Suddenly the Boondogle looms into the foreground, right before the camera lens, taking up the entire frame. The idea was to set up a sequence of shots that visibly linked Zinzi's terror with the Boondogle's arrival. In storyboarding every one of the Boondogle's appearances it will be necessary to ensure that, at least at a subliminal level, Zinzi's fear is linked to its tangible manifestation in the Boondogle.

Moreover, the viewer's experience should be focalised at times through Zinzi's point of view in order that our experience is aligned with hers. For instance, in this same sequence, we could see the Boondogle through the eye

of Zinzi's needle as she tries to rethread it after muddling the beads – recalling Mei spotting the small Totoro through the hole in the bucket. Alternatively, we could see the room blur through Zinzi's tears and sleepiness, so that neither Zinzi nor the viewers are sure whether or not they are seeing straight and whether or not the Boondogle is real.

When asked in an interview whether there was one pivotal scene that was representative of *Spirited Away* as a whole, Miyazaki answered that there were two scenes that could be considered symbolic: the initial scene in the car depicting Chihiro as a vulnerable little girl, and the final scene that portrays her as full of life and as having “faced the whole world” (cited in Mes 4). Similarly, I would like to present Zinzi in the opening and closing scenes in such a way that underlines the distance she travels in emotional terms. So in the first scene, Zinzi cowers in the doorway to her home, her eyes brimming with tears – while the rest of the world celebrates New Year. If we fast-forward to the final scene, it is to witness Zinzi's realisation that she can, at last, “feel her heart” – or access her inner strength. This time round, she does not linger in the doorway, but goes inside to rejoice with her siblings. These polar opposite scenes are intended to show the extremities of Zinzi's emotional arc, to demonstrate that she does, in the end, overcome her debilitating fear and achieve self-integration.

Miyazaki's films offer a wealth of conceptual and aesthetic inspiration that can be adapted and re-interpreted in making *Zinzi and the Boondogle* into a fantastical journey that also bespeaks an emotional process. For it is my ardent hope that Zinzi's rite of passage will be one with which children can identify, and so be encouraged to face their own innermost fears.

CHAPTER 6

From the Mind's Eye:

African Oral Storytelling and Aesthetics in

Children's Animated Feature Films

6.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that in animated feature films that draw on African storytelling there exist specific and powerful means of exteriorising the realm of the imagination. Thus a comparative study of three animated children's films is undertaken to explore the aesthetics of cultural expression in conjunction with the aesthetics of subjective perception. The oral tradition of storytelling in Africa is considered in relation to questions of structure and style, ranging from the musical score through to the use of accents, symbolic spaces and techniques for representing subjective experience.

The thesis is primarily concerned with the screening of interiority. Yet, given the social realist aspects of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* – particularly its engagement with the issue of child-headed households – it is necessary to engage to an extent with the social justice and political themes that dominate much African cinema. Indeed, Sharon Russell points out how African directors attempt “to give voice to the unique problems of their homeland” (1).⁹³

⁹³ Russell also discusses the legacy of colonialism (1-2) and evaluates the term “Third Cinema”, indicating that this phrase is often seen as pejorative (2-4). Nonetheless, Anthony R. Guneratne maintains that Third Cinema theory is the only significant branch of film theory that did not originate within a specifically Euro-American context (7). Third Cinema, in its focus on socio-political themes, is closely linked to theories of postcolonialism. For instance, in a discussion of African cinema in the postcolonial era, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o insists: “Decolonisation of the mental space has to go hand in hand with that of the economic and political space” (93). Arguably, decolonisation of the *cultural* sphere, via media production, is equally important to economic and political independence. In his 1992 text, *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, Manthia Diawara outlines what he sees as the three major threads of contemporary African cinema: firstly, socially realist narratives that deal with contemporary issues (141-52); secondly, films of confrontation between Africans and their European colonisers (152-9); and thirdly, films which concern a “return to the source” – and to traditional African customs (159-64).

However, while acknowledging that economic and political themes are the tenets of much African cinema and its analysis, this chapter does not focus on these debates. The research engages to a greater extent with the African tradition of live action films that explore aspects of interiority, such as ritual magic and religious moments. Manthia Diawara points out that African oral narratives abound in digressions, parallelisms, flashbacks and dreams, and that – aesthetically in the same tradition – an African film can contain all these elements without necessarily disorienting its audience (*African Cinema* 11). The work of Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène, for one, consistently portrays otherworldly events.⁹⁴

However, this chapter limits its close analysis to films that utilise animation, as these are particularly germane to the practical focus of my thesis – given the nature of the project *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. As discussed in the chapters on Jan Švankmajer and Hayao Miyazaki, animation is one means of filming interiority, and of representing aspects of the imaginative realm that are difficult to represent in live-action filmmaking. The programmer and producer Irene Kotlarz claims that many of the concerns of animation have been with the unfilmable, or with aspects of the imagination that are hard to represent in other media (cited in Curtis 25). Movement itself can be rendered in evocative ways, while objects and people can be deformed, metamorphosed or dismembered: accordingly, many of animation's themes have come from fables, folklore or magic (cited in Curtis 25).

Yet, despite Africa's rich folkloric heritage, precious few animated films have been made on the continent. So there is little precedent for animating African stories. In the United States a few television shorts have been based on African tales, for instance *Afro-Classic Folk Tales* (1993), in which a storyteller narrates two tales – one about the famous trickster, the spider Anansi. The other is – worryingly – about a tiger, so, despite the title, it is surely not African in any accurate sense! In South Africa, a couple of television series depict folktales, but no animated features as yet have drawn on the

⁹⁴ Ousmane Sembène has a massive oeuvre, including *Borom Sarret* (1963), *Niaye* (1964), *Xala* (1974) and *Ceddo* (1977). He is often cited as "Sembène Ousmane", in the French style, as Senegal is a former French colony.

tradition.⁹⁵ In my research I have come across only two animated features that have been made with significant African input: *Kirikou and the Sorceress* (1998: dir. Michel Ocelot) and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* (2003: Roger Hawkins).⁹⁶ In order to consider these films in terms of African storytelling, I have used Disney's *The Lion King* as a point of comparison (1994: dir. Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff).

Kirikou and the Sorceress tells of baby Kirikou, born with the capacity to speak and to reason. A sorceress called Karaba has cast a spell upon Kirikou's village: the spring has dried up and the men of the village have all disappeared. Kirikou decides to rid the village of Karaba's curse and to understand the cause of her wickedness. He journeys to a magical termite mound, where his grandfather, who knows of Karaba's secrets, awaits him. Kirikou determines to remove the thorn from the sorceress' back – the cause of her evil. Having liberated her from her evil powers, he transforms into an adult man and asks her to marry him.



Figure 58: The newborn Kirikou washes himself in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*

⁹⁵ Firdoze Bulbulia, Chairperson of the Children and Broadcasting Foundation for Africa, holds that as the political milieu began to change, South Africa saw a sprinkling of African storytelling in the children's programme *Kideo*. The format included a short segment involving an African woman storyteller who enticed children to listen to her stories. Later the books from which the stories emerged would be brought into the studio and the drawings became part of the presentation. Bulbalia holds that "animation in the crudest form was beginning to unfold". Now more sophisticated animated productions have begun to be produced. A notable example is 3-D animated series *The Magic Cellar*, a South African Broadcasting Corporation and Canadian co-production, each episode of which is a self-contained animated folktale. Ironically, the initial animation was carried out in India, for lack of trained animators in South Africa.

⁹⁶ Moustapha Alassane of Niger, dubbed 'Sub-Saharan Africa's Father of Animation' (who is said to have made the first film in black Africa in 1962), was asked in an interview in 2005: "Then is it true that Africa has so far produced only two long animated feature films – 90-minute *Legends of the Sky Kingdom* of Zimbabwe and 75-minute *Kirikou la Sorcier* of Senegal?" His answer was "I don't know of any other apart from these two" (Ondego n.p.). In fact, Ocelot's sequel to *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, namely *Kirikou and the Wild Beasts*, was completed in 2005 and has been making its way around the festival circuit – but it has not yet had general theatrical release, and is not yet available on DVD.

The Legend of the Sky Kingdom follows the adventures of three orphaned children, Blockhead, Squidge and Lucky, who escape the Underground Kingdom, where they are slaves of the Evil Empire. They embark on an epic journey to the Sky Kingdom in search of the legendary Prince Ariel. As they journey through perilous terrain, they have to learn to place their faith in Prince Ariel and to follow the dictum "believing is seeing". En route they meet with many creatures – both friends and enemies – before eventually reaching the fabled Sky Kingdom.



Figure 59: Blockhead, Squidge and Lucky with tripods Badza and Italiano from *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*

The Lion King is the tale of a young lion prince, Simba, who is born on the plains of the African savannah, thereby demoting his uncle Scar to be the second in line to the throne. In order to become King, Scar plots with the hyenas to kill Simba and King Mufasa, but the plan to kill Simba fails. Scar leads Simba to believe that he is to blame for the King's death, and Simba flees the kingdom in shame. Simba leads a blissfully hedonistic existence with a warthog and a meerkat, until he is eventually persuaded to return home to overthrow the usurper and claim the kingdom as his own – thus completing the "Circle of Life".



Figure 60: Coming full circle in *The Lion King*

6.2 “African” enough?

In the context of this chapter, it is necessary to raise the question of what makes a film “African”. While the question clearly raises the danger of essentialism, in terms of my own aims to make a recognisably South African film, it is worth teasing out the distinctions.

Kirikou and the Sorceress is loosely based on a West African tale, or collection of tales, about a boy who speaks to his mother while still in the womb. The French director, Michel Ocelot, was raised in Guinea; the composer Youssour N’dour is Senegalese, and the voice-over artists are all French-speaking Africans. The film, which uses computer animation made to look like traditional cell animation, draws heavily on African imagery. However, the film was a French-Belgian production that was entirely funded and animated in Europe. Here is a film made with European funding and expertise, but which draws largely on Africa for its story, subject matter and aesthetic style. Of course, funders can lean on a creative team, altering the aesthetics or the storyline in ways deemed to be more profitable, thereby compromising a film’s “authentic” African-ness. Keyan Tomaselli raises the question as to partnerships that develop between groups indigenous to Africa and foreign filmmakers, and to what extent such a film may be seen as “African” (8). As Josef Gugler has pointed out, most African films that have reached foreign audiences have been dependent to some extent on overseas finance, technicians and production facilities (6). While *Kirikou and the Sorceress* is by no means an entirely African production, it presents a useful case study in terms of this chapter: for there is sufficient African input to evaluate the ways in which African storytelling, themes and aesthetics have influenced its production. Critical for consideration, then, are the disjunctions that arise out of the film as a site of cultural intersection – an issue that I will discuss later in this chapter.

Directed by Zimbabwean Roger Hawkins, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is entirely animated in stop motion animation, using junk, which the filmmakers have promoted as a unique African art form – “junkmation”. The style is influenced by the street art aesthetic of works constructed from

recycled materials. The Zimbabwean producers, Phil and Jacqui Cunningham, worked with a crew of fifteen young artists, animators and technicians, self-financing the film from an agricultural commodity trading business in Harare. The film is entirely produced in Africa, but the cultural irony is that *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* seeks far less of an African branding than does the European-produced *Kirikou and the Sorceress*.

The Lion King is nominally set in Africa, but was produced entirely in the United States with virtually no input from African filmmakers or artists.⁹⁷ *The Lion King* belongs to a tradition of animated American films set in Africa that includes *The Prince of Egypt* (1998: dir. Brenda Chapman and Steve Hickner), *Tarzan* (1999: dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima),⁹⁸ *Jungle Book: Lost Treasure* (2003: dir. Michael McGreevey)⁹⁹ and *Madagascar* (2005: dir. Eric Darnell and Tom McGrath). This chapter uses *The Lion King* for the purposes of counterpoint, and because of the extent of its popular appeal and influence – it has been the most widely watched animated feature of all time (Ward 171, Vogler 275).

I focus, thus, on three disparate animated feature films. Whereas only *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is unambiguously African in terms of production and financing, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Lion King* are useful to this discussion in engaging with African storytelling and aesthetics in divergent ways.

6.3 Story Origins

While *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, and *The Lion King* are all set in Africa, the screenplays draw to varying degrees on African themes and stories. *The Lion King* owes nothing to African folklore, and its conception of Africa as a setting is largely filtered through western

⁹⁷ The exception is Lesotho-born Lebo Morake, who co-operated with Hans Zimmer on the musical score, which I will discuss in the section “Song and Dance”.

⁹⁸ There are 41 Tarzan movies spanning 1918 to 1999, most of which are live action rather than animation (Maltin 1359-61).

⁹⁹ There have been five live action versions of the *Jungle Book*, made between 1942 and 1994, and three animated versions, made between 1942 and 2003 (Maltin 718).

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conceptions of the continent as a timeless and a-historical realm. In writing *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, Phil Cunningham created a story that is not particularly African in its roots, although it is certainly influenced by its African context. By contrast, Ocelot specifically adapted West African folklore to his own ends in writing *Kirikou and the Sorceress*.

In the "Author's Notes" that appear on the *Kirikou and the Sorceress* website, Ocelot speaks about the origins of the film:

The story of the film is loosely based on the African tale which I used as a starting point in order to develop a nice, simple story with the questions I asked as a child and the convictions I have assumed as an adult. (n.p.)

Ocelot has clearly made a free adaptation of the original material; moreover, the script might be based on an amalgam of several West African tales (Stafford n.p.). Yusef Salaam points out that stories of children giving birth to themselves are "universal" in Africa (21). Similarly, Charles Phillips holds that many African peoples recount the history of a child "born fully equipped to survive, with precocious wits, the strength of an adult and the ability to talk at birth" (84). So the film could be said to draw on a generic African tale that has various versions, rather than on an immutable blueprint.¹⁰⁰

The Basotho people tell of a marvellous, warlike child born to his mother in a time of direst need, when the fearsome beast Khodumodumo is terrorising the people (Phillips 85). In the end he cuts open the monster to free all the animals, men and women of the villages (Phillips 85). Ford relates a similar Basotho tale, about the very last woman left on earth, who gives birth to a child with the powers of an adult man, who overwhelms the monster Kamma and frees all the world's people from its insides (36-7). Similarly, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* ends with its hero liberating the village men from Karaba's clutches. Tellingly, the hero kills the sorceress in the original story; whereas in Ocelot's version Karaba is stripped of her powers when Kirikou

¹⁰⁰ In fact, according to Joseph Campbell, the tendency among makers of legend everywhere has always been to "endow the hero with extraordinary powers from the moment of birth, or even the moment of conception" (319).

removes the thorn from her back, and instead of killing her he marries her (Stafford n.p.). Despite the non-violent resolution, the ideological implications of a woman being saved through marriage are arguably no more enlightened.

An interesting point of comparison is a tale told in Angola, of Sudika-mbambi – the “Wonder Child” – who similarly speaks to his mother from the womb (Ford 29). As a young man, Sudika-mbambi does battle with an old woman who has her young granddaughter possessively trapped: he kills the old woman and marries the girl (Ford 32-3). *Kirikou and the Sorceress* echoes this story in culminating in a marriage, but in keeping with Ocelot’s modern sensibility and reticence to depict murder, Kirikou liberates the trapped “young girl” from *within* the sorceress.

In fact, the motif of emergence from within is one that recurs throughout *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. Salaam points out that just as Kirikou enters the light of day through the darkness of his mother's womb, he comes to the light of his mission through being almost drowned in the dark womb of the village's spring – before being miraculously resurrected (21). Later Kirikou enters the womb-like termite mound in order to meet with his grandfather, who passes on the wisdom he needs for the final stage of his journey. According to Salaam, Kirikou must repeatedly enter the womb to be born into a higher consciousness: his repetitive emergence from the womb is an aspect of the “African mytho-mystical tradition that goes back to ancient Ethiopia and Egypt” (21). Similarly, Clyde Ford points out that the motif of the hero’s death and resurrection is found with great regularity in African mythic traditions (35). In this sense the sorceress is also “reborn” when Kirikou liberates her from her evil powers.

Whereas the rebirth from the womb is a particularly African motif,¹⁰¹ there is much in the story of Kirikou that reflects a wider folkloristic tradition. In his analysis of Russian folktales, Vladimir Propp points out that most tales begin

¹⁰¹ The rebirth from the womb is clearly related to a more universal mythology of death and resurrection that informs many religions and cultures. A clear parallel is with the Greek legend of Persephone, who dies and is resurrected, symbolising the energies beneath the earth that manifest themselves in the cycles of planting and new growth (Ford 46).

with a hero setting off on some form of quest to find something or someone, or to rescue them from the clutches of an evil force (39). Usually it is an old king or the village elders who send the hero off with a specific mission (Propp 39). *Kirikou and the Sorceress* follows the basic quest structure, but unusually in folkloric terms, Kirikou sets his own mission – namely to find out why the sorceress is wicked. He is not prompted by anyone else to do so. In this way the story follows the African oral tradition of the “Wonder Child”, born with fully developed reason and arriving at a time of dire need (Ford 30, Philips 84-5). Michael O’Sullivan argues that “what sets Kirikou’s unorthodox hero apart is that he isn’t merely content to accept a series of tall-tale confrontations between good and evil, albeit ones that he’s on the winning side of” (WE57). Rather, the implicit message seems to be that by removing the root of trouble or evil, one can alter its manifestation. This is certainly a modernising intervention on Ocelot’s part, as the exploration of the nature and cause of evil is almost unheard of in terms of oral folklore, which usually polarises good and evil. As Bruno Bettelheim puts it, “the figures in fairy tales are not ambivalent” (9).

Like *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is clearly structured around a journey, in which the three children undertake a quest for the fabled Sky Kingdom. The film carries a Christian subtext, and according to Rita Mbanga, in charge of marketing the film, Cunningham was inspired by “the biblical quotation of John 14v6 where Jesus says that He is the way, the truth and the life” (personal correspondence, 2004 July 5). Although the film contains no direct allusions to this quotation, and God is represented as “The Sky King” and his son as “Ariel”, the film is indubitably a call to faith – with its repeated mantra of “believing is seeing”. In this way, unlike *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, the story is thematically more rooted in a western Christian ideology than in traditional folklore.

I questioned Mbanga about African influences on *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, and received the following answer:

There is a strong African flavour to the film as we are all African, but definitely there are elements of the film that

make it appealing to an international audience. ... A balance is key – African styles are unique and fresh internationally and it's really important to stay true to your roots – Africa in this case but yes we want the international community to be able to relate and appreciate the story and the art too.
(personal correspondence, 2004 July 5)

Aesthetically the “junkmation” style is eminently African in its look and feel, as is the music. However, the story itself unfolds along the lines of the mythical quest, with a Christian theme. Granted, the quest is given an African flavour through the nature of the various places visited en route – for instance Baobab Plane – and through the presence of animals such as the crocodile, the chameleon and the hyenas. But the three child protagonists, Blockhead, Squidge and Lucky, could be from anywhere. Although there are African names thrown in for three of the more minor characters – Nkululeko, Gugulethu and Badza – in the film’s actual title, the main locus of branding, there is nothing to suggest Africa. Conceivably the universality of the branding is in keeping with the film’s spiritual impetus.



Figure 61: Lucky and Blockhead – made of junk – in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*

The Lion King deliberately evokes “Africa” through the icon of the lion – most emblematic of African creatures in the West. In focusing on a lion, however, the story reflects its Western conception of Africa, for, contrary to what might be expected, the lion is not central to African folklore. On the contrary, Allen Roberts points out that the wild animals most represented in African art and

folklore are not those that people from other parts of the world associate with the continent (118) – for instance the lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino. Instead, Roberts claims that in African culture “a more curious menagerie emerges”, of animals remarkable for how they look or act, and that provide the most useful symbolic expressions of human situations: armadillos, antelopes, baboons, buffaloes, chameleons, crocodiles, hornbills, hyenas, pangolins and snakes (118). Significantly then, the animals in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* are a skunk-like creature (a “zoril” or “zorilla”) which attacks Kirikou in the tunnels; a snake that works for the sorceress; a warthog who guards the mountain; squirrels who help Kirikou, and toucans in his grandfather’s home. These are patently not the animals associated with safari Africa, but are the creatures of West African folktales – a proper consequence of drawing on local material rather than projecting an outsider’s view onto Africa.



Figure 62 and 63: The squirrels that come to Kirikou’s aid in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*;
The cast for *The Lion King* – not the creatures of African folktales

The Lion King is neither based on African animal symbolism nor on any pre-existing African story. Interestingly, Jefferey Katzenberg, Chairman of Walt Disney Studios, claimed that the movie was the company’s “first cartoon feature not based on a fable or a literary work” (cited in Kuwahara 9). However, critics often point out the influence of *Hamlet* and of *The Jungle Book* (Kuwahara 9, Ward 4), and there has been a great deal of controversy around the proximity of *The Lion King* to the Japanese animated television series *Jungle Emperor* (Kuwahara 9).¹⁰² Certainly, in telling of Simba’s coming of age and to the throne, *The Lion King* recalls countless myths of transformation and

¹⁰² According to Kuwahara, there exist a number of distinct parallels with this television series, which has the English title *Kimba the White Lion* (9). Interestingly, the original title given to the Disney animated feature was *The King of the Jungle* (Kuwahara 9).

of accession: for the story is that of the universal mythical quest or hero's journey, as outlined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.¹⁰³

Contemporary screenwriting is heavily influenced by Campbell's theory, for the most part indirectly – through Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey*, which reorients Campbell's theories for screenwriting purposes. Tellingly, Vogler relates how he was employed as a consultant during the writing of *The Lion King* (267). He describes how a father-and-son story was developed by borrowing inspiration from *Hamlet*, and how he completed a Hero's Journey analysis of the *Hamlet* plot to illustrate its turning points and movements (267-8). He goes on to enact the same kind of analysis on *The Lion King*, which involves the young Simba going out into the world and facing a number of tests, before he is ready to return and take up his kingship (268-9).

Annalee Ward questions why *The Lion King* has received such intense response, both positive – in the light of the box-office receipts, and negative – in the light of objections to embedded racism and sexism (3). She suggests that the answer lies in "the movie's use of mythic narrative that, by its nature, advocates a morality" (3). In creating what is without a doubt an eminently moral tale, Disney has bought into Africa's mystique as it exists in the Western imagination – rather than in the African oral tradition.

6.4 The Oral Tradition

According to Lizbeth Malkmus and Roy Armes, an oral performance relies on a close link between storyteller and audience, in which the latter contributes to the telling – "either through some ritualised pattern of response, or simply through the interest (or lack of it) expressed as the story unfolds" (178). A number of African films, including those of Ousmane Sembène, have included the presence of a storyteller or griot, who detachedly narrates the

¹⁰³ Campbell's outline of the hero's journey is described in Part 1 of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which describes the departure, initiation and return of the hero (49-138). However, Clyde Ford sees Campbell as having written "sparsely and often derisively about African mythology, demoting African contributions to the level of folktales rather than including them in the ranks of the 'higher mythologies' reserved for oriental and occidental cultures" (ix).

story and holds different aspects of the narrative together. Diawara points out that even where no griot is present, the director usually acts as a kind of third person narrator, refusing "to let the spectator into the characters' minds" (*African Cinema* 164). However, Diawara does acknowledge the fundamental difference between oral literature and cinema: for whereas the filmmaker uses means of technical production to tell the story, the griot "enunciates by incarnating characters one by one, dominating the narrative with his or her presence" ("Popular Culture" 114).

In fact, Diawara sees this distance between spectator and character as a particular trait of the oral tradition (*African Cinema* 164). In this sense, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* breaks significantly with its oral origins. For we carry a strong identification with Kirikou as protagonist, sharing for much of the film his subjective experience, for instance when he crawls painstakingly through the Forbidden Mountain. Moreover, Kirikou himself narrates tracts of the narrative, even churning out his inner thoughts as direct-to-audience dialogue. His thought process is occasionally externalised on the screen, in what look like oval-shaped slides. For example, when Kirikou first sees the monster who has drunk up all the spring water, he thinks out loud, "I've got to tell my uncle to kill him", and his words are accompanied by a still frame of his uncle on the screen. (See *Clip 1, Chapter 6* on DVD.)

Tomaselli *et al* argue that direct narration is one technique that recreates the oral emphasis of African culture-as-nurture (59). In the case of *Kirikou*, however, the direct narration originates from the central protagonist and his subjective experience, rather than from a detached observer. Nevertheless, there is one noteworthy moment where a detached voice narrates a long scene almost devoid of movement or action. The scene in question takes place as Kirikou's grandfather explains to him the source of the sorceress' pain, and, by way of illustration, a number of still frames accompany his words. During this sequence, the grandfather acts as a temporary third-person narrator and takes on something of a griot's role (See *Clip 2, Chapter 6* on DVD.) But for the most part, the griot's voice, which would have narrated the original tale, is internalised within the unfolding action.

Diawara claims that all African directors – being influenced consciously or unconsciously by the storyteller’s techniques of narrating – resort in different ways to oral storytelling forms (“Popular Culture” 120). It would seem that Ocelot’s work is implicitly shaped by oral storytelling techniques in his narration of *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, in that the original material comes from the oral tradition. In evaluating the effect of oral techniques on Ocelot’s work, it is useful to look at ways in which West African films broadly speaking are influenced by orality, and at the features that define the region’s cinema.

6.5 Defining features

In “The Cinéaste as a Modern Griot in West Africa”, Anny Wynchank identifies four defining characteristics of West African films (15-6). The first is that “the narrative is structured in a linear pattern, often interspersed with digressions and marked with repetitions” (15). Secondly, the characters in the film are often types who can be found in the oral tale, and the itinerary can be that of an initiatory journey (16). Thirdly, the topic of the film, as in the oral tale, is often based on the irrational (16). Finally, the film usually illustrates a moral teaching, which frequently reinforces traditional values (16).

Wynchank’s defining characteristics seem relevant for a discussion of *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, given that it is based on a West African oral tale. In that the oral tradition traverses cultural and geographic boundaries, many of the defining elements apply to some extent to *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, albeit a Central African rather than a West African film.

6.5.1 Linear structures

In keeping with Wynchank’s first characteristic for West African narratives (15), both *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* are linear in their structures and are marked with repetitions, although both are too tight as narratives to contain much digressive material. Of course, repetition is one of the simplest methods of story construction, and is a structural device

in much oral literature – not only that of West Africa. In *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, the children stop at a number of points along their journey, each of which involves an obstacle that must be overcome. Similarly, Kirikou repeatedly fulfils a “saviour” function: first he saves his uncle from the sorceress; next rescues the village children twice in quick succession; then revives the village by rejuvenating the spring; and finally liberates the sorceress from her pain and, in turn, the village from her wickedness. In keeping with the usual pattern of folktales, each time Kirikou succeeds in overcoming an obstacle, the subsequent one proves more challenging.

The repetitive structure can create dramatic irony, for example where Kirikou saves the children twice in quick succession. The first time he saves them from a magical boat that the sorceress sends to trap the children, and the second time he rescues them from a mobile tree that has the same purpose. The second time round, the audience members are primed to recognise the tree’s evil intent. And so the viewers are drawn into participating actively in the narrative, as they root for Kirikou to save the day once more – in much the same way that an audience at an oral performance is drawn into the narrative via repetition. According to Malkmus and Armes, the repetitions or doublings in oral storytelling presentations may vary according to local circumstances or audience response (204). Of course the structure of a film enjoys no such flexibility, and yet, Malkmus and Armes point out, systematic repetition is the organising principle of most films based on oral material (204).

Kirikou and the Sorceress does deviate from its linear pattern for one fleeting but deeply unsettling flashback, which constitutes one of Ocelot’s modern interventions into the original story. In an even simpler graphic style than the bulk of the animation, the flashback depicts men beating the young sorceress and driving a thorn into her back. This is apparently the cause of her pain and, in turn, of her evil. Wynchank points out that analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flashforward) are modern techniques unknown to traditional practitioners of orality and rarely used by African filmmakers (17). Tellingly, this deviation from the linear structure comes at a significant point of departure from the original tale’s thematic content. For it is the

unprecedented presence of the thorn that suggests the root of evil as being tangible and consequently changeable – a notion not present in the oral tale.

6.5.2 Initiatory journeys

Diawara describes the travel of initiation or the educational quest as the “structural cell of oral literature [and] an important motif in African cinema” (“Popular Culture” 122). This is in keeping with Wynchank’s second defining characteristic of West African films – that of the initiatory journey (16). Certainly, in all three films under discussion, the protagonists are sent on quests of initiation.

In *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, Kirikou has to journey to the far side of the Forbidden Mountain in order to find out the truth about Karaba’s evil nature. Adults in the story have ready-made answers – when they have them at all. But Kirikou reaches the crux of the matter, and when he returns, it is with the capacity to vanquish Karaba’s power, whereupon Kirikou magically turns from a tiny child into a man.

Similarly, in *The Lion King*, Simba needs to venture away from the pride lands – in order to mature before taking on his kingly responsibility. Simba’s journey to adulthood is not based on an African initiatory myth, unlike Kirikou’s quest, which symbolically culminates in his instantaneous transformation into an adult. Instead, *The Lion King* relies on the more graduated structure of a *bildungsroman*.

The journey in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* constitutes a search for Prince Ariel. Just as Kirikou learns lessons from the challenges along his journey, so the three protagonists learn by responding to the difficulties they face. Blockhead, the impetuous leader, learns to listen to others and think before he acts. Lucky overcomes his fear and timidity, and Blockhead’s little sister Squidge matures and turns out to be an optimist who never gives up.

Along the way in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, there are a number of puzzles that the children have to solve. After all, one aspect of the journey structure is that heroes are often presented with a puzzle to work out in order to progress, and this may be a riddle or a signpost that points several ways (Propp 60). Blockhead, Lucky and Squidge have to choose between an arduous route through the desert or the “wide and easy road” that passes through bountiful orchards. One of my criticisms of the film is that the riddle is all too easily solved. The wily chameleon tells the children to take the easy road, but the children have barely been faced with the conundrum when a messenger bird Lulu arrives to hint at the correct way. Immediately thereafter they consult their “tele” device, which endorses what the bird has told them, insisting that “Narrow is the path that leads to life, but wide and easy leads to strife”. There is no chance to deliberate before the solution is presented. (See *Clip 3, Chapter 6* on DVD.)

The maze is a literal manifestation of the puzzle motif and interestingly occurs in both *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*. In the latter, the maze is the Jungle of Confusion through which the children must pass to reach the Sky Kingdom. A bird named Prof leads the children into mistakenly believing that they will find their way through by consulting their intellects. The maze in folklore usually tests the hero’s rational capacity, but in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* it is the children’s faith, and their plea to Ariel, that saves them. Here the traditional folkloristic motif of the maze has been inverted to communicate a message about the value of belief.

The maze in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* appears in a sequence where Kirikou carves a tunnel with his sword through the Forbidden Mountain. (See *Clip 4, Chapter 6* on DVD.) The depiction of his journey resembles the cross-sections used to show tunnels in wildlife films, and the audience can follow Kirikou’s progress through – inch by arduous inch. At last then the camera moves back briefly into a long shot of the maze, and we can see that – at the moment that Kirikou gives up – only the thinnest of barriers exists between his sword and the way forward. Thus dramatic irony is created as the audience moves out from an almost claustrophobic perspective to seeing – for an instant – the broader view of an omniscient narrator. This shift parallels the change in

perspective that Kirikou must undergo to get through his quest: for he has to “step outside himself” and “see the bigger picture” in order to navigate through, perceive his goal and find his way.

The over-arching puzzle in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* is the question as to why the sorceress is evil. The conundrum helps to drive the narrative forward, and is used as a device to bind various stages of the narrative: for it is Kirikou’s burning desire to answer the question that projects him into each new stage of the journey. Riddles are a common feature of African oral literature – indeed of universal folklore – and are repeated at intervals, helping to structure tales. The most recurrent phrase in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is the inverted proverb, “believing is seeing”, which seems rather anomalous at first, but clarifies itself as a call to faith and is recounted a dozen times, notably when the children are most endangered.

6.5.3 Irrational themes

Wynchank’s third defining feature of West African films is that they, like oral tales, are often based on the irrational (16). Similarly, Malkmus and Armes maintain that the elements of magic in oral tales are a crucial characteristic that can be drawn on by filmmakers:

[Oral tales] are set in a world away from everyday reality and often shot through with elements of magic, in a world in which existential barriers between humans and animals (and even non-animate things) are dispensed with so that all interact on the same plane. (178-9)

Given that *Kirikou and the Sorceress* is based on an oral narrative, it is unsurprising that the “reality” portrayed is “shot through with elements of magic”. However, the relationship that Ocelot maintains with the irrational is ambivalent. Propp indicates that during his journey the hero will probably receive help from a wise person or magician who will provide a magic sword or some other kind of protection (43-6). In keeping with this pattern,

Kirikou's mother arms him with his father's sword for protection, but remarkably this is not magical at all. Kirikou uses the sword for purely practical purposes, such as cutting his route through the Forbidden Mountain and creating a beak to disguise himself as a bird. Moreover, when Kirikou requests a talisman from his grandfather, he meets express refusal – his grandfather stipulating that this would be his downfall.

This undermining of the power of talismans is a further intervention into the original story on Ocelot's part. However, it does seem that this updating of the traditional story leads to a confusion of value systems, for on the one hand the story buys into the magic and charm of African folklore; but on the other hand the narrative points to the banality of evil, and the inanity of superstition. The grandfather's seminal speech is focused on the weakness of the villagers in accepting everything about their current situation, when there is a perfectly rational explanation for most events. It emerges that contrary to the villagers' beliefs, the sorceress has neither eaten any men, nor been responsible for the spring drying up. In response to Kirikou's question about Karaba's penchant for human flesh, his grandfather assures him, "She likes yam in a spicy sauce, just like you".



Figure 64: The not so all-powerful Karaba in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*

Yet, rather than eating the men, Karaba transforms them into fetishes, and the spring dries up not because of a curse on her part, but because of a supernatural monster drinking all its contents. It hardly seems that these explanations are any more rational than the ones the villagers believe. While Ocelot ridicules superstition, the alternatives he poses are just as irrational – presenting a major discrepancy in the modernisation of the traditional story.

I do not see the need for the film to communicate a mutually exclusive binary opposition between rationality and magic. However, it does seem disingenuous to disparage irrationality, while at the same time drawing unabashedly on the charm of magic to drive one's narrative. How does one square the triumph of rationality with the existence of fetishes and even talking animals? Karaba's eventual rehabilitation implies the pre-eminence of rationality, yet the film draws on magic from the moment Kirikou speaks from the womb in the opening scene.

Interestingly, irrationality is often aligned with emotion and with women, as well as with so-called primitive cultural beliefs. It is Genevieve Lloyd's view that privileging rationality is part of an ideological move to favour patriarchal values as well as "modern" positivist systems of thought:

The obstacles to female cultivation of Reason spring to a large extent from the fact that our ideals of Reason have historically incorporated an exclusion of the feminine, and that femininity itself has been partly constituted through such processes of exclusion. (xix)

Perhaps Ocelot wanted to avoid explanations that vilified women, which might help to explain why the ending is changed. In Ocelot's version, instead of being killed, the sorceress is understood, healed and loved. Conceivably, the re-narration of the tale in this way undermines the patriarchal ideology implicit in the original tale.

Yet we are never given any inkling of the original crime that drove the men to attack Karaba. Perhaps modern sensibility deems the men's action reprehensible – whatever her crime? Andrew Osmond argues that the driving in of the thorn is a rape allegory, which "is not less horrid for the delicacy with which it works on child and adult levels" (52). He maintains that although this story is Ocelot's own invention, it feels unforced (52). The rape allegory rests on Freudian symbolism of penetration, and in this reading, Karaba is literally emasculated in the act of withdrawing the penetrating thorn. Yet, despite this reference to past trauma, the film never quite

satisfactorily answers the question it repeatedly poses: "Why is the sorceress so evil?" Perhaps this is because the narrative operates on the level of Levi-Strauss's mythology to offer a *symbolic* and (falsely) reassuring resolution to social problems that cannot readily be understood or solved in rational or practical ways.

6.5.4 Moral teachings

Wynchank's fourth defining characteristic for West African films is that they usually illustrate a moral teaching or contain a social criticism (16). The main question driving *Kirikou and the Sorceress* pertains to why Karaba is so evil, and the moral teaching is contained within the search for an answer: Ocelot urges his audience to active questioning rather than passive superstition. His plea for rationalism constitutes his social critique, yet, as noted above, it jars within a magical context. The resulting anomaly represents the kind of moral juncture that can occur when a traditional tale is appropriated and retold, however sensitively, within a modern context.

Ocelot is candid about his merging of themes traditional and contemporary, claiming that apart from the theme of superstition, other themes flowed naturally too:

...From very African topics such as the importance of the family and of the group, a certain harmony with the body, to universal topics such as war of the sexes – (the sorceress is a beautiful woman and she fights her battles with men), altruism, shrewdness, forgiveness, time ticking over, love – that between a man and a woman of course – but also that between mother and son, an emotion not dealt with in traditional folklore. (cited in Stafford n.p.)

The topic of the gender war is an intriguing, if not fully resolved, addition to the story. In one sense, the story is very traditional with the male hero effectively saving the sorceress-turned princess from evil. Granted, there is a

rupture in the traditional depiction of gender relations, in that we see men physically attacking the young Karaba. Yet we never discover the reason for the attack, and I would suggest that the obscurity around Karaba's pain, and around her resulting evil, significantly undermines Ocelot's rationalist aims. It seems that Ocelot struggles with reconciling a rational vision for the film with the original story in which the sorceress is simply and irredeemably wicked. Instead of killing the sorceress, in Ocelot's version Kirikou kisses Karaba, whereupon he is immediately transformed into a beautiful young man.¹⁰⁴ Kirikou returns with Karaba to his home village, and asks the villagers their forgiveness for her past wrongs.

The moral message has come under some fire from critics, for instance Kate Stables:

Ocelot's decision to dump the original myth's gruesome ending in favour of an extended plea for all round reconciliation leaves a heavy-handed and homiletic final impression that belies the film's essential charm. (77)

The *denouement* is indeed very doctrinal – the explicit plea for forgiveness constituting a further moral teaching not contained within the original narrative. The pedagogical intent partially overwhelms the narrative's conclusion, and highlights the disjunction that can occur when a modern filmmaker tackles an oral tale from a particular moral stance that is not embedded in the original material, in this way manipulating the representation of culture.

¹⁰⁴ The kiss echoes European folktales in signalling the release from a spell, for instance the princess who kisses the frog to restore the prince, or the kiss that is required to wake Sleeping Beauty. The kiss in this African context is purely Ocelot's intervention, as it is not a motif that, as far as I can see from my research, exists in the West African oral tradition.

¹⁰⁵ Indeed the "realism" of contemporary CGI is so "good" that it sometimes looks like rather "wooden" human acting, for instance in *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (2001: dir. Hironobu Sakaguchi and Moto Sakakibara).

6.6 Ethics of cultural representation

While on the topic of cultural representation, it is worth mentioning the heated controversy that has arisen around the semi-nudity of some of the characters in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. The village women are depicted topless and the young Kirikou has no clothes at all. An article in *The Economist*, entitled “A Honey, Bare”, describes how French producers with an eye on the American market asked Ocelot to put bras on his female figures and a nappy on Kirikou (97). He refused and they backed out of the deal. So Ocelot put together a production package that included funds from several sources, and that involved making parts of the film in Budapest and Riga. According to the article, when the film was first released in the United States in 2000, the nudity issue came up time and time again. Ocelot was asked after one preview why he depicted black women with bare breasts and not white women; his answer was “There are no white women in the film”; he argued further that his film is a tribute to a culture that has a “healthy, straightforward attitude to nudity” (97). Yet, the BBC turned the film down on the grounds that, although it is beautifully designed, “the film's depiction of bare breasts and child nudity will prove problematic in terms of conventionally prudish Anglo-Saxon ideas of what is appropriate entertainment for children” (97).

I believe that these reservations are misplaced and that the film's stylised figures are respectfully handled. The theme of nudity also seems to carry metaphoric value for the story: when Kirikou arrives to ask his grandfather for help, he is told that the solution lies in personal courage and “the nakedness of innocence”. However, the counter-argument might be that through the partially nude figures the film promotes an essentialist and retrogressive view of Africa. It is worth comparing the controversy with that which ensued with regard to Miyazaki's *My Neighbour Totoro*, in which the father baths with his two young daughters. Possibly the difference is that whereas Miyazaki is a Japanese animator depicting a culture as it is from the inside, Ocelot is a European animator in more danger of “exoticising” his subjects. Nevertheless, the furore in each case points to fears of depicting cultural norms at odds with those of the West – a trend that seems

undesirable in raising children with any degree of tolerance or wider understanding.

6.7 African graphics

Despite the debate around nudity in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, the aesthetics have for the most part won reams of acclaim. David Sterritt describes the film as being “many times more African than *Tarzan* and *The Lion King* combined” (15), and Michael O’Sullivan describes the film as “a refreshing change from the Disneyfied setting of *The Lion King*, which somehow made Africa look a bit like an airbrushed theme park in Southern California” (WE57).



Figure 65: Simba in an airbrushed version of Africa in *The Lion King*

Ocelot’s use of African motifs and aesthetics certainly helps to set apart his visual style from generic Disney. However, in his “Author’s Notes” on the *Kirikou and the Sorceress* website, Ocelot discusses the problems of treating Africa graphically, pointing out that while Africa has a great tradition of decorative art, it lacks a substantial tradition of figurative graphic art (n.p.). He claims that for purposes of inspiration, he imagined an African Le Douanier Rousseau, which helped in designing the decor of the background scenery. For the characters, he drew on Egyptian art, in order to avoid caricature, and so that “the handsome individuals would immediately appear striking” (n.p.). On the surface this statement might read as an attempt to avoid what are thought of as Negroid looks, but Ocelot seems to be speaking more about the style of the art than the actual features of the people, which are convincingly West African. The fetishes are clearly inspired by West African sculptures, and also by Science Fiction robots: they move

mechanically and have the ability to set fire to a home from a distance, or to see for miles around.



Figures 66 and 67: Backgrounds inspired by Rousseau, figures by Egyptian art, and fetishes by West African sculptures in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*

As mentioned, Ocelot grew up in Guinea, and, as far as colour is concerned, he claims to have drawn on his own vivid childhood memories:

...An ochre village, the yellow savannah, the emerald forest, the green river, the hut of the sorceress, the outside as grey and black as death and the inside as red as hell, and the rainbow-coloured finale of a crowd at a fancy-dress party. ("Author's Notes")

Ocelot's nostalgic reminiscences then inform his connotative use of colour. Although there is symbolic abstraction in the graphics, a great deal of accurate detail went into the making of *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. The plants were copied from those growing on the continent, with Ocelot insisting that the drawings had to be exact reproductions. The result is richly detailed, and in many ways watching the film is like leafing through a fine children's picture book, the illustrative impression being reiterated by the simplicity of the actual animation – the movement of which is controlled and rhythmic. Osmond maintains that the tale's rhythmic quality extends to the action with appealing results, as when Kirikou repeatedly bumps his head on the same turn while scrambling through a tunnel (52).

While *Kirikou and the Sorceress* employs computer animation made to look like traditional cell animation, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is entirely executed in

stop-frame “junkmation”. The filmmakers claim that they hired street artists and vendors – wire artists and tinsmiths who had never done anything remotely connected to film work (“Press Pack” 4). They go on to describe the sorts of materials employed: “The Jungle of Confusion is literally a jungle of old and broken computers, adding machines, keyboards and printers”. The film also features two vacuum cleaners, seven television sets, five radios, thirty circuit boards, five typewriters, two stoves, three fridges and five washing machines (“Press pack” 7).

The use of found objects creates a texture that computer graphics simply cannot match. However, my concern is that the foreground figures and the background scenery are both so textured – and similarly coloured – as to lead to a blending of foreground and background that makes the action at times difficult to discern. Perhaps the blending functions to underscore the confusion experienced by the characters themselves in these settings, but the result can at times be taxing to watch. The problem vanishes when the children are in the desert, where their textured figures stand out brilliantly against the flatter, monochromatic backgrounds.



Figure 68: Blockhead, Lucky and Squidge against textured background in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*

The press pack outlines some of the daunting financial, technical and logistical obstacles faced in the production of *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*. The struggle against the odds tells of a wider experience in African filmmaking over the decades, described by a number of commentators including Gugler, who outlines the funding and distribution hazards that African filmmakers face (4-5). Going “low-tech” has been one strategy widely employed in Africa in order to get films made at all. No digital special effects were used in the production of *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* – instead all

effects were achieved in camera. The marriage of relatively low-cost technology with street art certainly makes for a compelling African aesthetic. There are strong arguments to be made in favour of cheaper means of animation than the cutting-edge but prohibitive 3-D computer animation that dominates the industry at present, and which can make for a very cold and plastic aesthetic.¹⁰⁵

In "Beyond Third Cinema: The aesthetics of hybridity", Robert Stam examines hybridity, garbage aesthetics and the "redemption of detritus" in African and Afro-diasporic cinema (35-45). He discusses ways in which "dispossessed New World blacks have managed to transmogrify waste products into works of art" (35), and describes the garbage metaphor as capturing the sense of marginality for underground filmmakers in Brazil (42). Animating junk is another version of this trend, and in this way *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* stands in counter-point to the expensive polish of *The Lion King* on not only aesthetic but also on political grounds.

6.8 Journeys through symbolic space

In terms of this thesis, the most pertinent aspect of animated African stories is the communication of inner, imaginative realms. Peter Hitchcock posits that in the oral narrative, the aura of magic is directly dependent upon the griot's powers of description: "in the way that he draws the listeners into the imaginative world of local mythology" (279). The allure of cinema can be its way of externalising magic, for "visually it can play tricks that are not simply the equivalent of the voice" (Hitchcock 279). There are moments in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* that are eminently magical, such as when little Kirikou swells and grows before our eyes into an adult man (See *Clip 5, Chapter 6* on DVD). Animation, much more than live action, is equipped to convey some of the enchantment of the griot's description of such a feat, precisely because of its capacity to depict the realm of the imagination. How else, outside animation,

could one cinematically render in the space of a single instant – or a single shot – this extra-ordinary metamorphosis from child to man?¹⁰⁶

In conveying inner journeys, animated African stories can create symbolic spaces, much as Miyazaki does in creating otherworldly realms. *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* and *The Lion King* all involve journeys in which the protagonists experience a number of different environments and their dangers. These locales are for the most part encompassed by the natural world, and many are archetypal spaces, with universal connotations in folklore. For instance, mountains routinely demand climbing in order that the protagonist might gain access to the unknown world on the other side. In *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, the Black Cliffs are one of the last barriers to Prince Ariel. In *Kirikou and the Sorceress* the Forbidden Mountain bars the way to the fount of knowledge, Kirikou's grandfather, who lives on the other side. European stories usually involve dark and mysterious forests: similarly in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* there is the Jungle of Doubt and Confusion. *Kirikou and the Sorceress* features neither forest nor jungle, but there is an adventure down the fast-flowing and treacherous river – a common feature of African folktales – which nearly drowns the village children. Notably, rivers in African mythology have been deemed liminal zones between the prosaic and spirit realms. Martha Anderson and Christine Kreamer point out that riverbanks are seen as the place where earth and water meet, and therefore as standing halfway between “civilisation and untamed nature” (49).

Indeed, in addressing the treatment of space within an African context, one needs to acknowledge the impact of African belief systems. This is clearly more salient in the case of *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, based on a West African tale, than *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* or *The Lion King*, which are rooted more in Western ideologies. Russell sees the interpretation of African films as particularly complex when attempting to deal with the idea of the fantastic: much of the related critical analysis is based on Western literary theory,

¹⁰⁶ This animated transformation recalls the uncanny morphing in Švankmajer's *Faust* (1994) from baby – through the stages of man – to skeleton, achieved through stop motion clay animation.

concerned with the individual in both social and psychological terms (10).¹⁰⁷ In trying to engage with apparently irrational moments in African cinema, Russell points out that, within the “Western tradition”, shared cultural perceptions enable us to distinguish between reality and illusion or fantasy; however, this distinction is difficult to make in African Cinema, as what may seem improbable to an outsider may well reflect the deep convictions of the character or filmmaker (10). Russell argues that in order to discuss the fantastic in African cinema, one must be aware of the connections between the real world and the spiritual world in the context of African belief systems: “Just as the oral tradition presents a narrative that transcends the boundaries between past and present, this tradition also connects the spiritual to the everyday” (10).

Crucially, one of the ways in which the spiritual and the everyday are connected in African folklore is through the juxtaposition of space.¹⁰⁸ Allen Roberts suggests that the village is defined against a “wilderness” encircling and extending outward from it (48). In this manner, home becomes the centre of “projective space” extending outward to the bush (Roberts 48). Central to the village in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* is the lone baobab tree, which is central to many West African stories (Stafford n.p.). Beneath the baobab, the old man talks to the children, and significantly, the sorceress and Kirikou stand beneath the tree at the end of the film, asking for acceptance.



Figure 71: Beneath the baobab in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*

¹⁰⁷ Conversely, Miyazaki explicitly states his interest in European, and especially British fantasy literature (Talbot 3), and it therefore seems appropriate to draw on Western theory around the fantastic in analysing his films.

¹⁰⁸ Many films include ideologically, culturally and ethically coded spaces, for instance, civilisation versus wilderness in Westerns, and safe familiar space versus terrible place in the Horror genre.

From the village, the world extends outward in conceptual and spiritual space, and along such paths one moves “from the familiar to the marvellous” (Roberts 48-9). In *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, magical events take place in the bush – specifically outside the village bounds. The exception is when Karaba sends her fetishes to hunt down the village women’s gold in their huts, which is the one time that her magic impinges on the village. For the rest, as long as Kirikou remains within the village, he is safe from Karaba’s guile. But the outward journey becomes inescapable: for it is into the bush that Kirikou has to venture in order to gather the wisdom he needs to overcome the sorceress.

In “Popular Culture and Oral Traditions in African Film”, Diawara claims African cinema depicts coded social spaces: “The external space in Africa is less characterized by the display of emotion and closeness between man and woman, and more by a designation of man’s space and woman’s space in society” (123). In *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, the village and the home are presented as the domain of women, whereas the men exist in a separate sphere – exiled until the film’s *denouement* to the sorceress’ domain in the bush. The implication is that the sorceress, in residing in the bush with the men, is not a “natural woman”. Karaba – and indeed all the villagers – is only able to reintegrate into a socially cohesive space once her “penetrating thorn” has been removed, and she has united with Kirikou. The male-female intimacy that defines space in many Hollywood films is almost entirely absent in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, in which the only sign of intimacy is with the men’s mass return, when all the couples embrace one another – signifying that harmony and the *status quo* have returned to Kirikou’s village.

Just as there is a spatial duality between village and bush in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, the geography of *The Lion King* is similarly divided into space that is safe and familiar, namely the Pride Lands, and “othered” space into which the young Simba wanders and where he receives his life lessons. Firstly, this unknown space encompasses the “dark place” of the elephant graveyard.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, there is the lush jungle where Simba hides out after running away,

¹⁰⁹ Given that elephants signify wisdom and memory, and graveyards stand for respect for the past, it is curious that this space is seen as dangerous and evil. In a sense, in standing for wisdom and being out of bounds the graveyard evokes the Tree of Knowledge and forbidden fruit. The symbolism is further confused by the fact that the Hyenas march Gestapo-fashion through the elephant graveyard – calling to mind the Third Reich.

and where he lives for a blissfully hedonistic period with a meerkat and a warthog, before returning to the Pride Lands to take up his kingship.

Space in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* is similarly structured around binary opposition: the Underground Kingdom where the children are enslaved and where life is full of hardship, and the fabulous Sky Kingdom, which, in a quasi-religious sense, offers salvation. The space in between comprises a series of symbolic destinations where the travellers must overcome obstacles and learn to place faith in Prince Ariel. This symbolic cartography is graphically laid out in the film's opening shots, which pan across a map showing utterly un-African metaphorical names, including The Jungle of Confusion, Baobab Plains, The Valley of Complacency and Mount Neverrest. Lucky, Blockhead and Squidge travel from a space of darkness and uncertainty to one of light and security, unlike Kirikou and Simba, who start off from areas of safety, travel out into "projective space" – dangerous realms necessary for their initiation into adulthood – only finally to return to the safety of the familiar.

The Legend of the Sky Kingdom is set in Africa, but the sense of locale is overwhelmed by the drive to create a symbolic cartography with pedagogical intent. Disney's African paradise in *The Lion King* corresponds to nothing in Africa's present or past. *Kirikou and the Sorceress* draws to the greatest extent on African conceptions of space. Still, it is compliant with their quest narratives that all three films use symbolic space to delineate the characters' internal journeys. These spaces take their cues from conceptions of Africa being in itself a perilous, "othered" realm, presenting untold hazards: whether the obstacles are deserts, jungles or insurmountable mountains, the struggle against the landscape signifies the struggle within for the various child protagonists.

6.9 Accenting meaning

Not only does *The Lion King* correspond to nothing of Africa as we know it, but it has even been argued that the film is so far from being African that it is

an allegory of Africa as America. Robert Gooding-Williams draws out the connections between the space of Africa and the space of America, arguing that the elephant graveyard, where Simba and his friend get lost, stands for the American inner city, outside of the bounds of the Pride Lands – or white America (373). His main evidence is the use of Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin's voices to represent the speech of two of the three prominent hyena characters as Black English and Latino slang respectively (373).

Certainly the accents in *The Lion King* are in no way African, just as the film is more about a timeless fantasy realm than it is about the continent of Africa. By way of contrast, both *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* almost exclusively employ Africans as voice-over artists. In making *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, Ocelot recorded the original French voices in his studio using African actors. In his "Director's Notes", he claims that he was determined to make a film in his own language, but one that is also the language of a part of Africa. But Ocelot expressly did not want "the villagers in the bush to have voices arranged and recorded in Paris", believing instead that by using African voices he brought an "authentic African flavour" to the film (n.p.). Similarly, the English-language version employs African speakers of English. It has to be said that the English voices sound very middle-class and unlike the voices of villagers in a West-African village. But possibly this is a rather moot objection, considering that the very use of English in this context would be highly unlikely in the first place.

It is worth considering the demand for both representation and accessibility in animation voice-overs. Indubitably, accents play a large role in constructing an aura of authenticity and, as seen in *The Lion King*, can carry socio-political subtexts. *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* uses a range of accents – including a kind of Scottish lilt for the bird-messenger, Italian for the tripod Italiano and American for the tripod Badza. I asked Mbanga whether any actors from other countries had been employed, and was told that all the actors were Zimbabwean except for Badza, who was played by an American who lives in Zimbabwe, and was also the sound engineer. Mbanga added:

With regards to not using more recognisably African accents, we decided initially that we wanted to make this film internationally marketable, and we believe using a diverse selection of accents is one way to achieve this.
(personal correspondence, 2004 July 5)

I do not agree that an array of accents is necessary to achieve international marketability, but do think that accessibility is key. The voices in both *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* are easily understandable and therefore accessible to a wide audience. The advantage of this clarity becomes especially apparent when considering, for instance, the Zimbabwean film *Everyone's Child* (1996: dir. Tsitsi Dangarembga). While the dialogue is in English, some of the speech I found difficult to understand due to heavily local accents. Seemingly there is a fine balance between authenticity and accessibility, and personally I would err on the side of accessibility. However, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* possibly loses something of a local flavour by employing so wide a range of accents as it does in its efforts to achieve not only accessibility, but also broad representation (See *Clip 6, Chapter 6* on DVD).

Accents play a pivotal role in defining identity and shaping possibilities for identification, in creating a film that is local or more international, and in raising or lowering the authenticity stakes. In terms of interiority, the use of local accents helps to create an aura of authenticity, which in turn allows us to engage more completely with the imaginative realm being portrayed. It is as if the accents endorse the "locality" of the imaginative realm. Reviewing *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, Osmond writes:

Rightly, *Kirikou's* air of cultural authenticity – which reaches down to African voice-actors and a score by celebrated Senegal musician Youssour N'Dour – feels like a part of the film rather than an exotic *raison d'être*. (52)

I would agree with Osmond that the voice-overs are pivotal in creating an impression of "cultural authenticity". Yet it seems crucial to acknowledge

that voice-over is never a fixed or immutable part of any animated film, given the medium's capacity for being re-dubbed. Accent is an infinitely mutable element of any animated film, as new connections are drawn and fresh overlays of meaning introduced each time the dialogue is dubbed into another language.

6.10 Song and Dance

Osmond's mention of the Senegalese music in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* refers to an aspect of the film that has certainly endowed it with a certain authenticity. In his "Author's Notes", Ocelot claims that he had long wanted to portray Africa, which he sees as "a powerful realm" that has never been portrayed in an animated feature film (n.p.). Ocelot specifically draws a distinction with *The Lion King*, which he sees as having "used African settings but not Africa nor Africans" (n.p.). The exception is South African musician Lebo Morake, popularly known as Lebo M, who worked with the composer Hans Zimmer on the score for *The Lion King*. However, while the film's soundtrack does have an African rhythm and flavour at times, it is still largely a traditional Disney score, using western instruments and arrangements.

On the contrary, Ocelot asked Youssour N'dour to foreground the musical sources in scoring *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, by using exclusively traditional instruments. Speaking of his part in the film, N'dour stated:

The director made it very clear that he wanted no modern or percussion instruments, and that he wanted to find a more natural inspiration, seeking inspiration where music originated. We have therefore used traditional African instruments like the balafon, the ritti, the cora, the xalam, the tokho, the sabaar and the belon. (cited in Ocelot n.p.)

The Legend of the Sky Kingdom is scored by Andrew Baird. According to the makers of the film, the lyrics are in Shona and some in Ndebele, the two main languages of Zimbabwe (personal correspondence, 2004, July 12). (See *Clip 7*,

Chapter 6 on DVD). The only English lyric is the refrain "Nothing is impossible if you believe", which clearly echoes the film's underlying theme of faith.

Russell discusses the link between oral storytelling and singing, pointing out that the oral tradition covers a variety of modes of expression from stories to epics, from poems to songs (9). Similarly, Tomaselli *et al* argue that the orality of African films is emphasised through the foregrounding of music, which can sometimes operate as a narrative voice in its own right (59). In fact, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* contains a moment in which rhythm alone is used to carry the narrative. (See Clip 7, Chapter 6 on DVD.) Kirikou's mother has told him that he will not be able to travel to the other side of the Forbidden Mountain to consult his grandfather. While she carries on steadily beating the grain in her pestle, Kirikou starts to mark out his own rhythm with his hand, with an irregular meter that contrasts with that of his mother. The camera slowly zooms in, while Kirikou taps with his hand, deliberating about what to do: the contrasting rhythm signifies that his path will diverge from the norm. Upon completing his rhythm, Kirikou has made up his mind that he will venture *through* instead of around the Forbidden Mountain. In this instance, rhythm in combination with camera movement viscerally conveys interiority – allowing us to access Kirikou's thoughts – as well as carrying the narrative forward.

Yet another way in which music operates as an autonomous narrative voice is through the key lyric that praises Kirikou, which is repeated in various guises, including: "Kirikou is small in size / But he's wise"; "Kirikou is very tiny / But he's mighty"; "Kirikou is so brave / Thanks to him we are saved". Thus the song, in all its variations, is used as a structural and thematic device that keeps returning the audience to the film's foundation in Kirikou's quest – and holds the stages of the narrative together. When the village children, and later the adults, sing this song in Kirikou's praise, the narrative is propelled by the shifting content of their adulation. Kirikou even hums the song as he sets off towards the Forbidden Mountain, as if to bolster himself; but at the same time, the melody – in being associated with his praises – describes the fact that this is a hero setting off on a grand quest.



Figure 72: The children singing and dancing Kirikou's praises

Notably, the children's praises are always accompanied by dance. Malkmus and Armes point out that translating oral literature to the screen requires that filmic equivalents for the live performance elements be devised and included in the text, and that sometimes the visual aspect of an oral storytelling performance may involve dance (178). In this way, the repeated dancing in *Kirikou and the Sorceress* possibly echoes something of the story's original context. In a discussion of the film *Faces of Women* (1985: dir. Desiré Ecaré), Diawara argues that song and dance are narrative processes that carry the narrative forward ("Popular Culture" 116). Certainly, the villagers' dances mark the moments of Kirikou's success against Karaba, and always spur her to new heights of evil in her retaliation. The end of the film, where Karaba has lost her powers, is not marked by the jubilatory dancing that one might expect: instead the narrative ends with the re-united men and women embracing each other in tranquil silence. It is as if the dancing has been used not only to spur the narrative on, but also to up the ante. At the moment of *denouement*, stillness is perhaps a more appropriate response.

In fact, song – and sometimes dance – is a binding feature of many children's animated films, whether influenced by an oral tradition or not. *The Lion King* includes long musical sequences, such as "Circle of Life" and "Hakuna Matata". But instead of being integral to the narrative, songs in *The Lion King* accompany riotous spectacles that drive the narrative forward only marginally.¹¹⁰ Possibly the difference is that in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, the

¹¹⁰ This use of music as spectacle rather than narrative element recalls classic Hollywood musicals of the 1930s, before the reign of Gene Kelly. For instance, the most memorable songs in *The Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933: dir. Mervyn LeRoy) and *Hollywood Hotel* (1937: dir. Busby Berkeley) – "We're In the Money" and "Hooray for Hollywood" respectively – were not designed to further the plots or develop the characters, but were rather stand-alone showpieces.

same song is repeated – with variations – numerous times, and so becomes a structural device as in an oral tale, which relies on repeated strains throughout. By contrast, “Hakuna Matata” is sung only once in *The Lion King*. The “Circle of Life” opens the film’s narrative and is briefly echoed at the end, literally bringing the narrative “full circle” – rather than giving pace and structure to a linear narrative as in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. (See Clips 8 and 9, Chapter 8 on DVD.)

Apparently what intrigued the composer for *The Lion King*, Hans Zimmer, was that animation, especially animation with animal characters, “works its audience magic on a purely subconscious level” (cited in Ward 36). Zimmer points out that not only do the words and the visuals combine to tell the story; the music is also consciously designed to follow “the emotional structure of the story itself” (cited in Ward 36). For instance, Zimmer composed a theme for the father character, Mufasa, which he believed should not be played after he died, except when he appears in the sky:

You hear this theme when Mufasa explains the kingdom and responsibility to Simba, but it basically dies with Mufasa, and doesn’t return until Mufasa reappears as a ghost. But it isn’t linked to Mufasa. It’s linked to the whole idea of being King, and Simba has to earn the right to have that theme, because he has forgotten all about responsibility and his role in life. (cited in Ward 37)

The Lion King effectively portrays interiority via music that follows the story’s “emotional structure”. Conversely, in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, music is used to structure the story, to move the journey forward via a series of stages, each marked by a variation on the theme song. On the contrary, *The Lion King* follows an “emotional structure” or curve, and in order to enhance this, certain characters – or the themes that they represent – are invested with musical leitmotifs. The music tends to define these characters and to underscore the emotions being played out on the screen, rather than to drive the narrative as in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*.

6.11 Conclusion

Whereas *The Lion King* has very little in its story origins, themes or aesthetics to do with the continent of Africa, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and, to a lesser extent, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* reflect African oral traditions and cultural expression. Neither film employs the griot, nor to any great extent the third person narration associated with many African films. Rather, the stories unfold through the action. However, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* does evoke its African oral roots in its repetitive use of dance and song, and in the sequence narrated somewhat detachedly by Kirikou's grandfather.

The Legend of the Sky Kingdom, although not directly based on oral material, reveals a number of structural parallels with oral literature. Yet these are possibly more due to its mythical journey structure, than to African oral influences. Nonetheless, *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, like *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Lion King*, involves journeys through dangerous physical spaces, which offer telling insights into Africa as a perilous and "othered" setting – and which also stand for the characters' inner journeys and initiatory processes.

Most importantly, animation allows the filmmakers to externalise the realm of the imagination – that which exists in the "mind's eye" of the audience when listening to a storyteller. For animation is uniquely equipped to visualise magical processes such as metamorphosis and transformations that characterise many folktales, including those within the African oral tradition.

Particularly with regard to animation aesthetics, voice-overs and music, the makers of *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* strive to a greater or lesser extent for African authenticity, while still considering issues of accessibility and the demands of the international market. I do not suggest in any way that African filmmakers have an *obligation* to strive for authenticity and self-representation, or to develop an African aesthetic and to tell "African" stories. But because Disney and Pixar are so dominant in the

international marketplace¹¹¹, and because African filmmakers cannot access the same resources, and therefore cannot compete in the market on a purely technical level, it seems astute to create animated stories that offer an alternative aesthetic, original stories and a divergent point of view.

There are schemes in development to strengthen the animation industry in Africa. For one, UNESCO has launched “Africa Animated!” – an initiative that “assembles resources and expertise for the production of children’s animated cartoons in Africa” (Aznar n.p.). The scheme was launched in 2005 with a series of regional training and production workshops. At a later stage there will be the establishment of a regional centre for animation training and production to address the absence of a formal training institution (Aznar n.p.). In South Africa, the Animation Production Training Initiative aims to train a pool of animators, and to experiment with African imagery in animation, with a view to producing a full-length feature down the line.

Thus it is within the context of an emerging animation industry in southern Africa that I need to consider the development of the film project *Zinzi and the Boondogle*.

6.12 Implications for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*

6.12.1 A South African narrative

In working on the treatment and screenplay for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, my co-writer and I have deliberated about how to make a film that is recognisably South African, which neither resorts to stereotype, nor alienates a global audience. Avoiding hackneyed clichés about South Africa is crucial in engaging with a local audience. At the same time, in order to be financially viable, *Zinzi and the Boondogle* needs to have a broad-based appeal to the international market. Part of the film’s allure should be its African branding and distinctive flavour; however, the story should be anything but parochial lest it lose that selfsame attraction.

¹¹¹ Since May 2006 Pixar has been a wholly owned subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company.

I am all too aware that – perhaps reflecting African cinema's propensity for social realism – the story of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* reflects social issues that may be confrontational for Western audiences: AIDS orphans, child-headed households and child labour. It is my hope that these will be rendered engaging through the use of fantasy, and that the film will convey a serious social message about empowerment without coming across as didactic or heavy-handed.

I do not for one moment suggest that children's animated films should necessarily reflect "reality". Yet, because of the underlying theme of child-headed households in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, it is necessary with this film to convey a more contemporary view of African society – one that is geographically and temporally bounded, rather than one set in an idyllic never-never land. For this reason, *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is set in the urban reality of Cape Town today. Although the everyday world intersects in surprising ways with a magical realm, it is central to the film's message that it is from a prosaic world of hardship and poverty that the children make their forays into the fantastic. The otherworldly realm exists to provide possibilities for growth and self-knowledge, but should not undermine the pressing reality of the children's everyday existence.

Thus *Zinzi and the Boondogle* aims to be contemporary and South African in its setting and tone; yet at the same time the story is partly inspired by the ancient European tale of *Rumpelstiltskin*. This will inevitably give rise to cultural disjunctions: *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, in particular, offers some valuable insights into the contradictions that might arise out of cultural appropriation. As discussed, there are times when Ocelot's determination to espouse rationalism sits rather uncomfortably with the magic of the original tale. The resulting anomalies raise crucial considerations about fidelity to original material, and the hazards of adapting oral tales and projecting onto them one's own set of meanings.

Is it acceptable, for instance, to allude in any way to African cosmology, in suggesting that the character of Gogo (literally Grandmother) can traverse the everyday and magical realms? Although it is never stipulated that Gogo is an

igqirhakazi or healer¹¹², she wears beads, which are associated with the role, and is endowed with skills in trance and divination. Cultural critics could well critique the incorporation of African cosmology as appropriation, and as being inaccurate. However, the idea is that Gogo is an archetypal “wise woman” figure with certain fantastical powers, rather than a traditional healer: she is not intended to be an anthropologically accurate figure, but to fulfil a story role.

Similarly, the Boondogle is not a pre-existing figure from African folklore. *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is not meant to be a direct or faithful adaptation of African oral literature: it is a narrative that alludes to both European and African folkloric traditions, that embodies Western notions of the fantastic as well as African cosmological belief. Out of the gaps and intersections there will inevitably erupt ambivalences and anomalies, but perhaps these most accurately reflect the disjunctions of a post-colonial, multi-cultural society rather than endorsing an essentialist view of what is “African enough”.¹¹³

6.12.2 Western fantasy meets African folktale

On the one hand, then, *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is inspired by the European fairytale of “Rumpelstiltskin” and employs classic fantasy devices such as hesitation; on the other hand; the script is rooted in African conceptions of parallel realms, and on the mythology of African beadwork.

In the classic “Rumpelstiltskin” tale, a poor woodcutter boasts to the king that his daughter is able to spin straw into gold. The king brings the daughter to the palace and orders her to spin a roomful of straw into gold by sunrise, or else she will die. In *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, the king’s equivalent is the landlady Mrs Valentine, who threatens to turn the children out of their home.

¹¹² *Igqirhakazi* is the isiXhosa term for healer – appropriate to Gogo since this is a story taking place in the Western Cape where the Xhosa language is predominant; the more commonly used *sangoma* is the Zulu term.

¹¹³ It is also worth noting that Cape Town is a cosmopolitan city, which has seen waves of different immigrants over the centuries: from the original Bushman peoples of the Cape to Malay slaves; Xhosa, Dutch and English settlers; Chinese, Greek, Portuguese and East European Jewish immigrants; and most recently, West- and Central African refugees. Naturally, these people have all brought with them their own cultural and spiritual traditions, so contributing to what cannot possibly be seen as a singular Cape Town culture.

The only way Zinzi can save her family is by beading an impossible number of badges in lieu of rent.

Much African folklore is concerned with the crossing of thresholds, and *Zinzi and the Boondogle* also draws on this concept of a parallel realm that provides opportunity for growth and self-knowledge. Zinzi's interaction with personified creatures draws on traditional modes of African storytelling, in which children cross into parallel realms and speak with ancestors or spirit creatures. It is our aim to bring this idea of slippage, a notion traditionally rural in context, into the contemporary urban landscape.¹¹⁴

The best-known character in Xhosa folklore is the Tokoloshe, whom the Boondogle recalls in his capricious mix of playfulness and vice. According to Penny Miller, the Tokoloshe, because of his many enemies, only allows himself to be seen by children, whom he befriends and trusts; likewise only children can see the Boondogle in his undisguised form (102). The Tokoloshe is usually kept by a witch, and eats her food and drinks her milk in exchange for carrying out her evil requests (Miller 102). Similarly, the gluttonous Boondogle produces the badges in exchange for sustenance. Most crucially, the Boondogle is the manifestation of Zinzi's terror in the same way that the Tokoloshe is perceived to feed off fear.

The Boondogle, rather than emulating an existing figure, represents a fusion of three creatures that are common around Cape Town – the baboon, dolphin and eagle, which represent the mountain, sea and sky respectively. Anderson and Kreamer discuss “mediators whose abilities to move between opposing realms endow them with ambivalent yet powerful qualities” (26). For instance, the Sherbro of Sierra Leone see pangolins, which have fishlike scales but can climb trees, as mediating between the three tiers of the universe – land, water and sky (Anderson and Kreamer 26). The Boondogle in fusing different creatures is similarly empowered to negotiate disparate realms: land, water and sky, and also the Real- and Bead Worlds.

¹¹⁴ For an in-depth discussion of African human and spirit worlds, see Martha G. Anderson and Christine Mullen Kreamer's *Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness* (11-80).

Furthermore, the Boondogle's composite creatures all carry significance in traditional Southern African cosmology. According to Miller, the baboon, like the Tokoloshe, is also often seen as the witch's familiar (102).¹¹⁵ Miller relates a story from Bushman folklore, which tells how baboons were originally little people, but mischievous and quarrelsome (14). One day they hanged the chief's son, and started chanting and dancing in celebration. Seeing the chief coming, they changed their chant, until a little girl persuaded them that the original was much better. So they sang and danced as before. Meanwhile, the chief fetched a basket of pegs and crept up behind the baboons, and drove a peg into each one's backside. They bound shrieking off to the mountains with inflamed bottoms, their tails sticking up behind (Miller 14). Just like the baboons, the Boondogle loves to perform, and revels in the chant and dance routine he uses to conjure up the badges. Zinzi, like the little girl in the tale, manages to outwit the Boondogle precisely because of his vanity and the fact that he cannot resist extending his game plan.

Zinzi and the Boondogle also draws on the African folkloric tradition whereby the bird is heralded as a messenger from the Other World – and sometimes has a saviour function (Knappert 38). Creatures who serve as go-betweens between this world and the next are often found at thresholds, for example rivers and crossroads (Anderson and Kreamer 57). Vuyo finds the mother eagle soaring above the highest crag – the threshold between earth and sky. The eagle provides him with one of her wing feathers, which later proves invaluable in the magical ritual that saves the children from entrapment in the Bead World.¹¹⁶

The dolphin represents the realm of the sea, which is often seen in African mythology as the ancestral realm, where the spirits of the deceased reside (Miller 98).¹¹⁷ Zinzi's journey through the ocean underworld is another manifestation of the idea that other realms linger beneath the surface of the everyday. Danger lurks in this netherworld that takes ingenuity and bravery to overcome: Zinzi has to disentangle herself and the dolphins from the net –

¹¹⁵ "He is the foot of a baboon" is a Xhosa proverb referring to a treacherous person (Miller 104).

¹¹⁶ Interestingly, Anderson and Kreamer point out that in Benin culture, the eagle feather is sometimes used in rituals (49).

¹¹⁷ Anderson and Kreamer discuss water spirits in detail, including underwater universes crowded with fantastic beings (49-53).

paralleling how she has to get out of another trap of her own making, namely her fear of and dependency on the Boondogle.

While I would like Zinzi and her siblings to be clearly South African, and for the story to feel authentically local, I also believe that the blending of western and African elements in the storytelling makes the story more internationally accessible. It is my co-writer and my intention that the story will appeal to audiences of a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds: that some will identify with the reality, others with the universal message of overcoming fear.

6.12.3 Alternative realities

Like animation, the cinefantastic is powerful because it offers a way to “film the unfilmable” and to express “unspeakable” alternatives to the reality of everyday life. Fantasy has the inherent possibility for subversion, offering possibilities that can only be seen through the blurring of reality and illusion. However, as Russell has pointed out, much of the critical theory relating to the fantastic is based on Western literary theory, which is concerned with the individual in both social and psychological terms (10). Therefore, in drawing on African folklore in addition to Western notions of fantasy, it is important to acknowledge the connections between the real and spiritual worlds in the context of African belief systems.

African conceptions of space are particularly pertinent to the construction of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. Anderson and Kreamer discuss spirit worlds in African mythology, which have been described both as mirrors and as inversions of the human world (45). The Bead World is very much a mirror of the real one, a pattern described by Lion Siroto as follows:

The traditional African did not conceive of the unseen world and its inhabitants as inordinately fantastic or disorganized. As a projection of man's own world, the unseen world was characterized by order and its inhabitants showed due concern

Zinzi and the Boondogle, in the vein of much African folklore, is concerned with the crossing of thresholds. Animation allows us to visualise stories that cross into the imaginative realm, and would ordinarily play themselves out only in the “mind’s eye”. What does seem critical is to employ animation that reflects contemporary African aesthetics.

6.12.4 An African aesthetic

I have argued that 3-D animation can appear overly flat and slick, and lack texture and depth. Yet 3-D offers all sorts of imaginative possibilities, and is less labour intensive and increasingly more affordable than the stop frame animation employed in *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*. The discussions around *Zinzi and the Boondogle* have suggested that the artists interpret 3-D animation within an African aesthetic: a more rich and textured – and ultimately convincing – appearance could be created by filming found or specially-made objects and then animating these via 3-D technology.

I am beguiled by the possibilities that “junkmation” affords – particularly in creating a contemporary and three-dimensional African aesthetic. To this end, I would like to draw on the aesthetic of contemporary beadwork: this would create a unique look not only for the Bead World scenes, but for many aspects of the animation – for example colour schemes, patterning and backgrounds. And just as Ocelot draws on the West African sculptural tradition to create his laser-shooting fetishes, *Zinzi and the Boondogle* will draw on African figures such as the two-headed dog in creating the ironic and omniscient guard to the Bead World portal.

Beadwork itself will also be recurrently visible throughout the film, given that the badges themselves are pivotal to the plot. And wherever possible, allusion will be made to the historical and social role that beadwork plays within South Africa. For beads have long been used to communicate messages, where both colour and design have significance. This tradition is evoked when Mrs Valentine bestows a badge, known as a “Zulu love letter”, upon the Boondogle. This is in keeping with the practice whereby beadwork

flows from females, the designers and manufacturers, to males – their traditional clients (Schoeman n.p.). In a specious show of affection, the Boondogle accurately interprets the connotations of different colours, according to Zulu bead iconography: “White’s a heart as pure as you / Red’s for love that’s strong and true....”

Notably, beads have a communicative function not only in conveying love messages. Traditional healers wear beads that symbolise their power to communicate with the spiritual realm: in fact, “to take up the beads” is the term used to describe undergoing initiation as an *igqirhakazi* apprentice. As mentioned, Gogo’s role as a “seer” is signified by the fact that she wears the white beads associated with the healing profession.

Furthermore, beads have been used in the past as currency for trade. Appropriately then, in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* the beads represent the children’s livelihood as they make badges in lieu of rent. Moreover, the beads drive the “barter system”, which Zinzi unwittingly implements with the Boondogle. The Boondogle refers to this range of beadwork functions when he first introduces himself to Zinzi:

From Afric’s north to southern shore,
Stretching back to days of yore,
Beads have taken pride of place:
Wealth of kings, diviner’s grace.
Lover’s letters, trader’s coin,
In beads you’ll find these roles conjoin!

Indeed, just as beads have traditionally been used for both communication and trade, Zinzi both communicates and barter with the magical world through her beadwork.

6.12.5 Girl at the helm

"Beading is for girls!" Sam cries when the children are landed with the daunting task of creating their first hundred badges. The other children stare at him, and the inanity of his position is quickly made clear when Zinzi asks whether boys prefer to live on the pavement. In an African context, an acute awareness of gender is essential in addressing children – long used to female subservience. So a very early impetus behind the film was to create an adventure with a girl at the helm. Significantly, a predominance of male heroes emerges in the discussion of "African" films in this chapter, in contrast with Miyazaki's *shōjo* narratives. *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is critically a female centred narrative, which recognises and values the powers of women and girls in a stubbornly patriarchal context.

Just as Ocelot tries to address gender relations in having Kirikou and Karaba debate equality in their prospective marriage, it is also my concern to make a film that encourages equality. I specifically do not want to cast Zinzi as a self-sacrificing nurturer who trades life opportunities and personal development for maintaining family and relationships. She is portrayed as an adventuress and a hero – not only because of the nurturing role that she plays. In fact, she is reticent about her all-consuming role of caregiver, and she clearly looks forward to returning to school. It is critical too that Zinzi's younger brother Vuyo is given a role in helping her to meet the beading deadlines, and in caring for little Leila. Lloyd's discussion, in *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, of emotion as something *not* opposed to reason (xix), pertains to Zinzi's emotional quest. For Zinzi manages to overcome her fear by integrating shrewd business sense (the bead bargain with Mrs Valentine), with physical, practical steps (the adventure), and loving care for her siblings.

There is, of course, another more malevolent subtext relating to gender that underlies the film: the Boondogle early on spots Leila and decides that she will be his prize. We veer away from sexual overtones that might frighten and alienate our child audience. However, on an oblique level, the story intends to allude to the trafficking and exploitation of children in South Africa

– a country where, according to the International Labour Office Report of 2004, roughly 53,000 children, almost all girls, are in domestic employ.¹¹⁸

6.12.6 Accent and language

Besides the issue of gender, crucial concerns that have arisen out of watching *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom* are those of accents and language. I am determined that accents should be South African, but am aware that in order that they be internationally comprehensible, they may well need to be more middle class than is strictly appropriate. Moreover, there is no one “South African accent”, but rather a multitude of accents – making accurate representation nigh impossible. The challenge is to strike a balance between local authenticity and international accessibility.¹¹⁹

Language has been a locus of debate from the start, as my co-writer and I have aimed to make the film internationally accessible. Zinzi and her siblings may need to use less local lingo than the ideal, yet we do not want to rob the dialogue of all local flavour. It should be possible to include some linguistic signifiers (the odd colloquialism such as “skollie” for hooligan, and “ja” instead of “yes”) in order to locate the film firmly in Cape Town – without running the risk of alienating children elsewhere. There has been a movement towards rendering South African movies multilingual: the low budget movie scheme DV8 is a case in point,¹²⁰ and there is ongoing dialogue

¹¹⁸ The International Labour Organisation’s “Facts on Child Labour” claims that at 26%, or close to 50 million child workers, the proportion of children engaged in economic activities in sub-Saharan Africa, is currently the highest of any region of the world.

¹¹⁹ On 3 December 2006 I met with Stuart Forest, the director of Triggerfish, an animation company in Cape Town, which is developing the concept designs for *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. I watched the pilot for a feature that Triggerfish is animating, set in Zimbabwe, but being largely funded by a North American organisation. I complimented the use of African accents, which I found particularly clear and accessible. However, he told me – with some regret – that the company had been requested to re-dub the piece using American actors, as the African accents were deemed too difficult to understand. Sadly my measure of accessibility may not be realistic in terms of expectations within the international marketplace.

¹²⁰ DV8 is a local initiative that develops, finances, produces and distributes low-budget South African films. Their output so far has included *Forgiveness* (2004: dir. Ian Gabriel), *Max and Mona* (2005: dir. Teddy Matera), *Bunny Chow – Know Thy Self* (2006: dir. John Barker) and *SMS Sugar Man* (2006: dir. Aryan Kaganof).

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around “progressive language policy” (Krouse n.p.). Even the broadly popular Leon Schuster¹²¹ switches between different South African languages.

But there is a crucial difference: *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is a film targeted primarily at children. So subtitling as employed by DV8 films, and by Leon Schuster, is simply not an option, as this would altogether miss the pre-fluent reading age group. As far as dubbing is concerned, this will depend on whether the film is made as a mixture of live action and animation, as originally conceived, or is entirely animated. Of course if the film is animated throughout, accent and language are infinitely mutable, as the film could be dubbed in accordance with market demands.

6.12.7 Underscoring the journey

Music as a carrier of culture will play a vital role in positioning *Zinzi and the Boondogle* as an authentically South African film, and also in underscoring Zinzi’s emotional journey. I envisage *Zinzi and the Boondogle* as utilising both scored instrumental music and a soundtrack with songs that speak to the story – either found or specially composed.

Diegetic music will be used in the opening New Year’s scene, which features a parade of Cape minstrels, situating the film immediately within the Cape Town locale.¹²² On an emotional level, the music conveys unmitigated cheer, and this works by way of counterpoint to Zinzi’s miserable frame of mind. As the crowd chants, “Ten, nine, eight, seven...” – working up momentum towards the moment of New Year – Zinzi sinks into herself with a deep sigh. With her mother dying, there is certainly nothing to celebrate, and the boisterous music only throws her gloom and isolation into sharp relief. It

¹²¹ Leon Schuster is a director of South African slapstick comedies, and although his work is almost uniformly dismissed by critics, his films are the only ones in South Africa to ensure profitable box office returns. His output includes *Panic Mechanic* (1997), *Mr Bones* (2001), *Oh Shucks... I’m Gatvol* (2004), and *Mama Jack* (2005).

¹²² Many locals call these performers “coons”, but this is considered pejorative for the word’s slave connotations, so the politically correct – although not widely used term – is “minstrels”. The annual Cape Town Minstrel Carnival, also known by its Afrikaans name of *Kaapse Klopse*, is held annually on January 2 or *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* (Second New Year). Competing teams parade in brightly coloured costumes, either carrying colourful umbrellas or playing musical instruments. The minstrels also perform non-competitively on New Year’s Eve, which is when the opening scene in *Zinzi and the Boondogle* takes place.

would be effective to include a strain of the opening music in the film's closing score, where Zinzi – outside her home in the street once more – is shown to be strong and free. Musically coming full circle, as in *The Lion King*, would emphasise, albeit perhaps only on a subliminal level, how far Zinzi has come in her journey to overcome her fear.

Anahid Kassabian, in *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*, discusses film music as a gendered, culturally and ideologically loaded semiotic system – central to positioning the spectator emotionally in the text, and facilitating identification with characters. To this end, Kassabian maintains that there is not only diegetic and non-diegetic music, but a third kind, namely source scoring, which “combines aspects of source music and dramatic scoring in terms of both its relationship to the film's narrative world and its coincidence with the onscreen events” (45).

Source scoring occurs in the funeral scene of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, which features a Xhosa song of mourning. What begins as source music – a song being sung by Gogo and her fellow mourners – progresses to match the dramatic events as if it were dramatic scoring. For instance, Zinzi tries to sing along, but finds her voice chokes up. This could take place at an instant of lull, where the song dips in volume. The moment when Vuyo lifts his teary eyes from the coffin to the dark mountain, and sees an eagle flying silhouetted against the cloud, could be accompanied by a tumultuous wheeling in the song. The shovels patting earth on the new grave, and hands laying down posies, could work in rhythmic conjunction with the singing. Finally, Vuyo laying down on the grave a picture of the four children with their mother could be timed to match the song's crescendo. Even when the singers stop and leave the funeral, a composed non-diegetic score, using the same melody, could continue under Gogo's conversation with the children. Notably, the funereal music directly articulates Zinzi's grief, rather than working by counterpoint, as in the carnivalesque music of the film's opening scene.

While both the minstrel and funeral singing are rooted in traditional South African music forms, I also hope to use more contemporary genres of local

music in the compiled-composed combination that will make up the soundtrack of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. Conceivably, Kwaito¹²³ and hip-hop are new manifestations of the oral tradition, as argued in “Zulu Oral Art” by H.C. Groenewald, who speaks of such styles as having a traditional base, with songs that are created orally (89). As such, Kwaito and hip-hop could be utilised not only to create mood, but also to deliver commentary on the story itself, much as do the refrains in *Kirikou and the Sorceress*. For instance, there is an upbeat moment when Zinzi rides off on the back of the dolphin, who churns through the water – sending white foam spraying in all directions. This high point could be underscored by a melodious Kwaito song, with words that externalise Zinzi’s thoughts. The sentiments she calls laughingly into the wind – “Okay, Boondogle, I bet this wasn’t part of your game plan! I *am* Queen for today!” – could be rewritten, using rhyme and rhythm as part of a buoyant Kwaito song. Alternatively, or in addition, the lyrics could allude forebodingly to unseen dangers ahead in the shape of the Boondogle’s net.

In keeping with fairly conventional dramatic scoring, a particular *leitmotiv* could be used for the three different animals, the baboons, dolphins and eagles.¹²⁴ These should capture the essence of each animal, as described by the Boondogle: “*Baboon* of guile, and *Dolphin* swift, *Eagle* fierce – each has a gift.” It follows that the Boondogle’s signature melody would ideally combine elements of all three *leitmotifs*.

Music will play a vital role in enacting transitions between realms, for instance the bead women’s haunting melody will be used to delocalise and defamiliarise space as they magically transport the children into the Bead World. This is another instance of source scoring, in that what starts out as a

¹²³ Kwaito is a music genre that emerged in Johannesburg in the early 1990s. It is based on house music beats, but typically at a slower tempo and containing melodic and percussive African samples that are looped, deep basslines and often vocals. More recently, Kwaito artists such as Zola have rapped their lyrics in a hip-hop style, while others such as BOP and Oskido have sped up their beats and toned down the male chants to create a softer form of Kwaito or African house.

¹²⁴ According to Kassabian, *leitmotiv* is a Wagnerian term that has become standard in film music criticism, and is defined by the *Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music* as follows: “a short theme or musical idea consistently associated with a character, a place or an object, a certain situation or a recurrent idea of the plot... These motifs are used, not as rigidly fixed melodies, but in a very flexible manner....” (cited in Kassabian 50).

diegetic song, dramatically underscores the children's transition – matching the shifts in the coloured patterns that Zinzi sees in her mind's eye, accompanying the children's convulsing limbs, and only trailing off well after the children's entry into the Bead World – where the singing women are no longer present.

Finally, in line with expectations of children's films, a theme song would be effective in binding the narrative and subtly alluding to the film's central message about fear. Kassabian points out that the theme song, where it exists, is generally given a high degree of attention, and that audience members may be familiar with it before they enter the viewing situation – from the radio, television advertisements, or film trailers (53). He points out that whereas it occurs most often during the main titles and/or establishing sequence, it often appears later in the film, functioning as a kind of *leitmotiv* (53). I believe that a theme song would be invaluable as a marketing device, and should position the film as urban, contemporary, brimming with adventure – and as eminently South African.

In seeking fresh and viable means to make *Zinzi and the Boondogle* a product of its continent, it is gratifying to watch films that to different extents draw on aspects of African cultural expression. *Kirikou and the Sorceress* and *The Legend of the Sky Kingdom*, as well as *The Lion King*, foreground a number of points worth considering in making *Zinzi and the Boondogle* – particularly with regard to cultural appropriation, conceptions of space, animation aesthetics, gender portrayal, and the employment of language and accent. In attempting to produce *Zinzi and the Boondogle* as an animated African feature, it would be foolhardy not to evaluate both the successes and shortcomings of the few precedents that do exist. This evaluation also serves to suggest ways in which African storytelling and aesthetics, transferred into the medium of animation, can best externalise the “mind's eye” – the realm of the imagination – in cinematic terms.

CHAPTER 7

Screenplay into Novel

7.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates questions that have arisen out of the adaptation into a short novel of the screenplay *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. After two option agreements on the screenplay had fallen through, my co-writer and I decided that a novel version would be another means of “getting the story out there”, with a view to a film being produced further down the line. I call the resulting work a “reverse adaptation”, given that it is far more common to base films on books than *vice versa*. The chapter investigates the ways in which the screenplay, a pre-filmic visualisation, diverges from the novel – specifically as regards the depictions of the characters’ inner states.

Theories of adaptation revolve predominantly around the transformation of novels, short stories and plays into films; very little has been written about the “reverse adaptation” from film to novel.¹²⁵ Of course, the novel *Zinzi and the Boondogle* does not strictly constitute the reverse of a “novel to film” adaptation, given that the film has not yet been made. Instead, I will be discussing the translation from one essentially verbal document – the screenplay, to another – the novel. However, the visuals and sound are crucially preconceived in *filmic* terms in the screenplay, which indicates in many ways how the film itself could be realised.

¹²⁵ One partial exception is Sharon Ouditt’s chapter about Virginia Woolf’s “cinematic” writing in relation to Sally Potter’s 1993 film adaptation *Orlando* (148–56). Ouditt looks at Woolf’s essay “The Cinema” in the light of Potter’s adaptation, and suggests that cinema gives birth to a new form of fiction: for in the novel *Orlando*, Woolf absorbs cinematic devices – adapting zooms, change-in-focus, close-ups, flashbacks, dissolves and tracking shots. In other words, it is written almost as a screenplay – but this is, of course, not the same as writing the novel of the film. There have also been studies of cinema’s influence on literature: for instance, Edward Murray discusses the cinematic novel, arguing that the novel and film need to be able to “coexist in their legitimate spheres – now and then even fruitfully influencing one another without either art violating the basic integrity of the other” (296–7). His concern seems to me unfounded, based as it is on a view of literature and film as immutable and essentialist art forms.

According to Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland, it is customary for *mise-en-scène* critics to privilege the filming over the script, downplaying the film's plot and focusing instead on "the process by which the script has been translated to the screen" (89). Bernard F. Dick puts it this way: "the script recedes into the background as it changes from a verbal to a visual text, so that by the time it has been complete, the words have been translated into images" (cited in Elliott 7). However, Kamilla Elliott rejects the idea that films have nothing to do with words, and the notion that films are only about visual language, pointing out that most screenplays consist predominantly of dialogue, which enters film directly as words (7).

Thus I propose that the screenplay should not be seen as a stand-alone document. Instead I will refer to the screenplay as a pre-visualisation of the film, in order that I might consider how the film could represent interior consciousness in ways not possible in the novel. I will specifically discuss ways in which the director and crew could shoot and cut specific sequences detailed in the script. Conversely, I will also consider the ways in which the novel can describe interiority in ways not possible on the screen.

The film critic Pauline Kael claims: "Movies are good at action; they're not good at reflective thought or conceptual thinking" (cited in Stam, "Dialogics" 59). My thesis takes issue with this view, arguing that, although films are more easily suited to action, they do have the capacity to describe reflection, thought and inner states of mind. Interestingly, the process of "reverse adaptation" has been invaluable in putting my thesis to the test, as it were. For the conversion of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* across media has clarified ways in which literature and cinema can differently externalise states of mind – and thus has elucidated aspects of the relationship between verbal and visual language.

7.2 Verbal "versus" visual language

The novel of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is fairly close to the screenplay, so much so that the novel could – after Wagner's definitions – be labelled a

“transposition”.¹²⁶ However, despite the proximity of novel to screenplay, there are telling divergences between the two media. Thus dialogues around adaptation are particularly germane to my investigation, given that adaptation studies have extensively explored the differences between novels and films.

In the section entitled “A poor cousin to written fiction?” in Chapter 1, I discuss the debates around verbal and visual language, and dispute the notion that cinematic images perform all the work of the imagination for spectators. I particularly contest George Bluestone’s argument in *Novels into Film* that the rendition of mental states cannot be as adequately represented by cinema as by the written word (47). It is the very challenge of screening interiority that this thesis investigates, and I am convinced that film merely employs different means for conveying mental states.

James Naremore believes that “the Bluestone approach relies on an implicit metaphor of translation, which governs all investigations of how codes move across sign systems” (7-8). According to Naremore, writing in this category usually “tends to valorize the literary canon and essentialize the nature of cinema” (8). Robert Stam points out that the traditional language of filmic adaptation of novels has often been moralistic, using terms such as “infidelity”, “betrayal”, “deformation”, “violation”, “vulgarisation”, “bastardization” and “desecration” (*Literature through Film* 3). The valorisation of the literary canon is clearly problematic. Nevertheless, identifying the essential differences between literature and cinema is crucial to my investigation. The problem, as Robert B. Ray points out, is that adaptation studies have typically advised readers of the cinema’s limitations: “it had, for example, no tenses, no means of maintaining strict points of view, no descriptions, and no way of revealing “interior consciousness” (46).

Indubitably, outside of voice-over, cinema does not have literature’s direct capacity for conveying interior monologue. However, there are other means of conveying interior consciousness via film, as there are uniquely cinematic

¹²⁶ Wagner distinguishes the “transposition” – a novel that is directly given on screen – from the “commentary”, where an original is either purposefully or inadvertently altered in some respect. The “analogy” he defines as a film that changes a film’s essential context (223).

ways of dealing with tense, with point of view and with descriptions – all of which I shall explore in this chapter. Imelda Whelehan describes the process of presenting a literary text on film as one in which

...the stock formal devices of narrative – point of view, focalisation, tense, voice, metaphor – must be realised by quite other means, as this is where the creative mettle of the adapter is put supremely to the test. (9)

There are undoubtedly a number of instances where “other means” proved necessary in converting the screenplay of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* into a novel, and these helped to throw into sharp relief ways in which cinema can uniquely convey the life of the mind.

7.3 Embedded detail

The most immediate challenge of writing from screenplay to novel was that of capturing the detail that I had stored in my own mind, for want of space in a screenplay’s necessarily brief format. Given that in writing the screenplay I envisioned myself not only as co-writer, but also as the director of the film, I felt it was safe to leave out a degree of detail – for instance the specifics of what locations looked like. Consequently the novel in its roughest draft, which was more or less a transcription into full-sentence prose, was thin on the descriptive front, and required filling out to make the setting and action come alive in the reader’s imagination. The following scene from the screenplay, for example, translates into a longer and more vivid passage in the novel – both of which I quote in full. I have included the ending of the previous scene, as I will discuss the scene transition in due course:

MOTHER
Happy New Year, my darling children.

Fighting back the tears in her eyes, Zinzi pulls away from her mother’s arms and goes to the doorway. Her slight figure stands alone, outside the circle of warmth.

Zinzi stares across the crowd and over the row of rooftops towards the harbour lights. The tears in her eyes reflect the fireworks exploding outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

Zinzi stands alone with tears in her eyes.

The gum trees rattle and creak in the wind.

Leila and Sam hang on either side of Vuyo. Leila holds her Teddy. Sam scuffs his best shoes in the dirt, with little repetitive kicks.

The children are part of a small GROUP OF MOURNERS, including Gogo whom we met in the opening scene. Her bead bangles slide on her arms as she sways, leading the singing. The beaded gourd swings from her necklace.

Zinzi tries to sing along but her voice chokes up. She picks up Leila and draws her tight.

Gogo slips an ostrich egg bangle from her arm and places it on the coffin, which SEVERAL MEN are lowering into the grave on ropes.

Vuyo lifts his teary eyes from the coffin to the dark mountain. For a few moments, he gazes at an EAGLE, its great wings silhouetted against the cloud - swooping with the wind.

Shovels pat earth on the new grave. Hands lay down posies.

Vuyo moves a bouquet to anchor down a drawing of the four children with their mother and father, sitting around a table.

(Appendix: draft screenplay, 7-8)



'Happy New Year, my darling children,' says their mother, drawing them all close. Fighting back the tears that prick her eyes, Zinzi pulls away from her mother's arms and goes to the doorway. Her slight figure stands alone, outside the circle of warmth. *I can't handle this right now.*

Zinzi gazes out across the crowd and over the row of rooftops stretching down the street, to the last of the fizzling fireworks exploding over Cape Town's harbour.

CHAPTER 2: Rain in January

Dark clouds billow over Table Mountain to hang heavily over the city. The children stand huddled together beneath a cluster of gum trees, whose branches rattle and creak in the strong north-westerly wind.

Zinzi looks at an old woman, known by everyone as Gogo - or Granny. She sways back and forth, the bead bangles sliding around on her arm as she leads the small group of mourners in a haunting song. Her strong voice slips in and out of harmonies, threading the tune together. Zinzi tries to sing along, but her voice chokes up with tears.

Gogo slips a bangle from her arm. It is threaded with beads and the shells of ostrich eggs. Murmuring a quiet prayer, she bends down to place it on the coffin, which several men are lowering into the grave on ropes.

Vuyo lifts his tear-filled eyes from the coffin to the dark mountain beyond. For a while he watches an eagle silhouetted against the cloud – swooping with the wind.

The adults pass the spades between them, scooping soil into the grave. The heavy sound of the earth hitting the coffin jolts in Zinzi's head. *The coffin where my mother – my mother! – is lying.* It feels as if her heart will explode in her chest. Zinzi's eyes feel hot, she wants to cry, but becomes aware of Leila sobbing at her side. She picks her up and holds her close, drawing comfort from her small, soft body.

The mourners place flowers on the mound of fresh earth, which despite everything smells like a newly dug garden. Vuyo tears a drawing out of his notebook, places it on the mound and moves a bouquet to weigh it down. It is of the four children with their mother, sitting around the table as they used to do.

Zinzi stares at her brother's drawing, unwilling to leave the graveside, to leave her mother. *We will never all be together again.*

(Draft novel)

Besides being more fully descriptive, there are new layers in the novel version. For one, Zinzi's inner thoughts are directly communicated: by comparison, the screenplay is terse in conveying Zinzi's state of mind. However, the filmic elements alluded to – cinematography, music and sound – are intended to carry emotion in indirect ways that make up for the immediate entry to thought that the novel provides, by allowing for an equivalent level of access to Zinzi's inner state. Yet, because of the unwritten rule that screenplays should neither dictate the way a film is shot, nor spell out exactly what characters are feeling, the screenplay should be subtly suggestive – embedding strategies for acting, lighting, camera, sound, music and editing within its concise format.

For one, the acting in the film is essential to exteriorising emotions described in the novel; however, giving too many dramatic pointers is not considered the screenwriter's prerogative. Thus the scripted line, "Zinzi picks up Leila and draws her tight" is less detailed in terms of motivation than the corresponding line in the novel, "She picks her up and holds her close, drawing comfort from her small, soft body". Yet it is my hope that the word "draws" gestures a reciprocity, and that the word "tight" communicates Zinzi's desperation. So Zinzi's acting should, in the very urgency of her

movements, communicate that she is not only giving but also receiving comfort from her little sister.

The only direct editing instruction – since a few are deemed acceptable – is that of the dissolve between scenes. This conjoining of two close-ups of Zinzi crying is intended to connect her state of mind at the funeral to her emotions during the previous scene – the last in which she converses with her mother. The previous scene ends with the following image: “The tears in her eyes reflect the fireworks exploding outside”. It is unnecessary to stipulate shot size: the fact that we can see Zinzi’s tears necessitates a close-up or even extreme close-up. The instruction “dissolve to” signifies the connection between this outgoing shot and the similarly composed incoming shot. The form edit combined with the dissolve is intended to elide space and time, and to carry emotion over from one scene to the other. In this way, Zinzi’s state of mind at the funeral – one of being overwhelmed by fear – is telegraphically conveyed, without recourse to voice-over or even dialogue.

Moreover, the “haunting song” mentioned in the novel can actually be *heard* in the film: as discussed in Chapter 6, the funeral singing can be defined as source scoring, given that what starts off as diegetic music, comes to define precisely the dramatic beats of the scene. Because the viewer will hear the music at the same time as witnessing Zinzi in close-up, the mournful singing should articulate Zinzi’s inner sorrow. We are thus aligned – through the pairing of sound and image – to Zinzi’s mental universe.

Working in conjunction with the mourners’ song is the earth thudding on the coffin. Thus music and sound punctuate images of spades shovelling earth, hands patting the grave and laying down posies – so constructing a rhythmic montage sequence.¹²⁷ Each repetitive element is intended to operate as a visual metonymy for the notion of “funeral”, and together the elements in their inexorable progression towards burial are supposed to speak, on a subliminal level, of Zinzi’s suffocating misery.

¹²⁷ Literature, too, can communicate rhythm through staccato words, rhyme, alliteration, sentence length, phrasing, and the repetition of consonants. All of these linguistic devices create a rhythm within prose, but it is not viscerally experienced like sonic rhythm, and it is qualitatively different.

Thus emotional cues are embedded in the screenplay's necessarily concise prose. These are intended to hint at ways in which the emotion and interior processes, described in more detail in the novel, can be realised on the screen.

7.4 Speaking from within

One way in which interiority is inscribed in the novel is through the direct inclusion of Zinzi's thought. The novel's portrayal of the funeral, for example, encompasses two lines of inner speech. The first voices Zinzi's desperation as she peers into the grave: "*The coffin where my mother – my mother! – is lying*". Later she laments, "*We will never all be together again*". Inner speech was introduced into the novel because the character of Zinzi when first transcribed seemed under-realised: she needed to live and breathe, to think and feel. It was apparent that in writing the screenplay we had been relying on the actor to bring Zinzi to life, as well as reckoning on interiority being supported by the *mise-en-scène*. Given the impossibility of replicating these filmic elements in the novel, an alternative dimension of interiority became necessary. Thus we settled on the kind of first person inner speech that is popular in contemporary adolescent novels.¹²⁸ Commonly such books convey a very First World sensibility, so it was critical to create inner speech that is more in keeping with Zinzi's reality. For instance, Zinzi lambastes herself after making a mistake with her beading: "Oh great. How stupid can I be? At this rate, we're so going to live on the pavement!" The tone is intended to be funky and young, but the issues are around survival rather than cellulite.

Inner speech usually accompanies first person narration, whereas *Zinzi and the Boondogle* is written predominantly in the third person. Therefore, the brief forays into inner speech – rendered in the first person – break the pattern. There is certainly a disjunction in the shifts from third person narration to first person inner speech, but it is a shift intended to align us rapidly with Zinzi's mental universe, just as the cut from an objective to a

¹²⁸ Examples are *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big, Round Things*, written by Carolyn Mackler and *The Princess Diaries* series, by Meg Cabot.

subjective point of view shot is meant to draw us into a character's perspective. The movement between Zinzi's actions and her inner speech is aimed at achieving focalisation in the novel, just as the inter-cutting of close-ups of Zinzi with her points-of-view is meant to focalise the film.

Focalisation intensifies at climactic moments in the film, for instance at the conclusion of the deathbed scene, when Zinzi moves to stand apart from her family. The extreme close-ups of her eyes are inter-cut with point of view shots of her family, and with point of view shots of the fireworks. The combination of shots cues us to read the scene through the lens of Zinzi's inner experience, bringing us very close to her – almost inside her. In terms of narrative placement the combination of extreme close-ups and point of view shots coincides with the moment of inner speech in the novel, in which Zinzi, overwrought by terror, thinks to herself, "*I can't handle this right now.*" In the section "Whose point of view?" I will further discuss focalisation through point of view shots.

Notably, the novel allows access not only to Zinzi's thoughts, but also to those of some of the other primary characters. However, the technique of direct inner speech is reserved only for Zinzi, while the thoughts of her siblings are conveyed instead via a version of the free indirect style. Stam defines the *style indirect libre* as referring to a kind of "grammatical-stylistic procedure, an adroit modulation of tenses by which the slow abandonment of pronominal antecedents evokes a slow gliding into an internalised sensibility" (*Literature through Film* 149). Stam describes the way in which Flaubert used the technique:

Through the modulation of tenses and modes and parts of speech, the pronoun or proper name ("Emma thought") gradually disappears in favor of the unmediated presentation of a character's thought ("How wonderful it would be to live in a castle in Spain!") Thought is rendered in reported speech, in the third person and in the past tense, but in a language impregnated by the feelings of the character. The effect is of a "dolly in" to consciousness, an indeterminacy of narrative

voice which mingles distance with interiority, molding a sense of intimate access to a character's mind, but without abandoning authorial agency and attitude (*Literature through Film* 149-150).

According to Stam, this style, revolutionary in Flaubert's time, has become the virtual norm in much of fiction today, largely because it allows for maximum flexibility for the writer, who can regulate distance toward the character (*Literature through Film* 150).

In a scene in which Zinzi's little brother Sam, alone on the mountain, is forced to face his worst fears, the text moves from signalling his thoughts via phrases such as "becomes aware", "wondering" and "tries not to think", to presenting his thought "You never know in the dark" in unmediated form:

In the long moments following the Boondogle's challenge, Sam becomes aware of the mushroomy smell of damp moss. He looks down at his stocky legs, scraped and scratched from his slide down the ravine.

The wails of the baby baboon echo from within the cave.

Wondering whether Leila could be inside too, Sam edges forward to stare into the dark entrance. He tries not to think about what else could be lurking inside.

You never know in the dark.

(Draft novel)

Notably, there are no italics for the last line, although the phrasing is ostensibly not different from Zinzi's direct inner speech. Whereas italics signal the sudden switches between action and inner speech on the part of Zinzi, there is a gradual lead-up to Sam's unmediated thought through the free indirect style that renders italics unnecessary. In a sense, italics are a visual mechanism reserved for Zinzi's inner thoughts – tied to her privileged status as protagonist.

Sam's thoughts are not recorded in the past tense, as is the norm with the free indirect style, but operate within the present tense used throughout the novel. The unconventional use of the present tense in the novel was a direct carry-over from the screenplay, which is, as *per* the norm, written entirely in the present.

7.5 Stuck in the present?

Bluestone points to the lack of the past tense in cinema, arguing that “the novel has three tenses, the film has only one” (cited in Whelehan 11). Of course one could contend that flashbacks constitute a past tense, and flashforwards a future tense. As I discussed when laying out the parameters for this thesis in Chapter 1, I have not focused on memory, given that the screenplay for *Zinzi and the Boondogle* does not deal with this aspect of interiority. It seems that because the film contains a large dream and fantasy quotient, the inclusion of flashback sequences would render the film overly complex for the child viewer. Memory in the film is only alluded to via visual motifs: Vuyo’s drawing of the family, the mother’s photograph and the string of beads that Zinzi wears – from which she draws comfort and strength.

However, there does seem to be space to experiment more with memory within the novel: indeed, in the absence of the film’s recurrent visual motifs, the inclusion of memory is key to keeping vivid the mother’s presence in the children’s lives. Thus the passage about Sam finding courage to enter the cave continues:

Sam remembers nights when he lay in his bed, stiff with fear – not daring to breathe. Ghosts on the end of his bed, shapes in the curtains... strangers to spirit him away. You never even know yourself in the dark. But Mama knew him. She knew to leave the door ajar, to let the light in a little.

(Draft novel)

Similarly, Zinzi’s thoughts return to her mother when she is in the boat, trying to whistle to capture the dolphins’ attention:

Alone in the bows, Zinzi gazes out at the dolphins, which tumble over each other before arcing out in great figures of eight. Their soft piping sounds remind her of the time her mother taught her to whistle. *I was little like Leila. At first I made pathetic ‘pwiff’ sounds, but at last I got it. I whistled and whistled, and even went into the main house to show Mrs Valentine. She wasn’t exactly impressed – not that she ever is. But Mama let me phone Daddy at work and whistle to him. It was like she always knew what I needed.*

The pain and loss flood over Zinzi in a great wave, and forgetting her mission for a moment, she whistles her sorrow into the sea wind. After a while, the dolphins look up and softly whistle a haunting melody in return.

(Draft novel)

Zinzi's memory, like her inner thought, is written in the first person – and is similarly formatted in italics. The only difference is the use of the past tense. In a sense, the memory constitutes another aspect of Zinzi's inner thought. The screenplay does not include this memory, but it is my hope that the haunting melody of Zinzi's whistling and of the dolphin's reply – rendered audible in the film – will convey the kind of melancholy that the memory in the book aims to create.

Maureen Turim believes that the literary equivalent to the flashback is often less distinct and abrupt than the cinematic flashback:

Verbal storytelling can ease temporal shifts through the sustaining power of the narrative voice, whether that of authorial omniscience or of a character in first-person narration. An arsenal of verb tenses and qualifying clauses render these shifts an invisible act of language. (7)

Certainly, temporal shifts are less noticeable in literature than in cinema, but this is of course not to say that filmmakers should necessarily avoid flashbacks. Like dreams, flashbacks can provide invaluable access to a character's inner thoughts. Cherry Potter suggests that the boundaries between memory and fantasy can become blurred in the imagination, depending on the reason why we are remembering: "whether our primary desire is to reach subjective truth or whether it is to reassure our egos" (*Screen Language* 24-5). She believes that most memories involve a combination of these two desires (*Screen Language* 25). In the sequence where Zinzi remembers her mother teaching her to whistle, the desire is surely for reassurance. But conceivably she is also seeking her own truth, reaching for roots at a time when she is – literally and figuratively – "at sea".

7.6 Levels of thought access

We are granted fairly frequent access to Zinzi's inner thoughts, including her memories, and to a lesser extent to those of her siblings. But are we granted some degree of access to the thoughts of other characters? As the primary

antagonist, the Boondogle, for one, is granted a number of dramatic asides, in which he makes it perfectly clear what he is thinking. But his soliloquies are usually more important in terms of plot than interiority, for example the rhyming couplet that the Boondogle delivers in both novel and film, while gazing at Zinzi's baby sister: "Leila is her precious thing: The perfect final offering". This little soliloquy hints at the Boondogle's plot to kidnap Leila, but does not reveal his inner experience, as such. The Boondogle is a showy character, without any conscience: endowing him with a rich inner life thus seems inappropriate.

Mrs Valentine, as the Boondogle's unwitting aide, and as secondary antagonist, is similarly granted several asides. The dialogue for screenplay and novel are in this case identical:

Letting herself into the main house, Mrs Valentine mutters under her breath, 'If that lot makes the badges, I'll eat my Sunday hat.' She stands for a minute, head to one side. 'Still, I can't lose. When they turn up without the badges, I will have every excuse to throw them out. I am sick of those noisy kids.' She makes a cup of tea, humming to herself and dreaming of the decent gentleman tenant she will get when the children leave.

(Draft novel)

Mrs Valentine is granted a degree of interiority here, but reader / viewer identification with her is undermined by her nastiness. The novel version also contains a line of "reported thought", not contained by the screenplay, about the prospective gentleman tenant. This line undercuts interiority in its humour, and is also dramatically ironic, given that the Boondogle is the only candidate.

The direct voicing of Mrs Valentine's thoughts is an unabashed carry-over from the screenplay. It would, however, not work in the same way to have Zinzi voice her thoughts out loud. Firstly, our experience of her mental universe is too frequent to make direct speech plausible, and she is often around others when she reflects to herself. Secondly, her thoughts are more nuanced, given that she is the protagonist. Thirdly, direct speech is inappropriate for Zinzi as a character, given that she is so much more withdrawn – particularly to start with – than is Mrs Valentine. Direct speech for Mrs Valentine seems apt precisely because she is such a larger-than-life

villain who barely ever stops speaking, including to herself, and is in this way not so dissimilar from the Boondogle.

Given that Mrs Valentine is an antagonist, secondary only to the Boondogle, she should not garner empathy from the audience. It is in keeping then, that in the film version of this same scene, the camera should neither dolly in nor capture Mrs Valentine's point of view as she mutters to herself, but should instead retain a detachment that keeps the audience at bay. Mrs Valentine's direct speech, a kind of dramatic aside, is patently not the equivalent to "dollyng in to consciousness" that Stam identifies as the effect of the free indirect style (*Literature through Film* 150). This *style indirect libre* is reserved for Zinzi's siblings, with whom the viewer is intended to identify positively.

In the novel, smaller characters such as Mr Solomon are granted neither inner speech nor are their thoughts described via the free indirect style. Either we are told what they feel, as in, "Mr Solomon cheerfully picks up the phone. He's feeling better now that he's decided to help the kids"; or they voice their thoughts aloud to other characters. A case in point is when Mr Solomon unwittingly tells the disguised Boondogle, "There must be something I can do to help the children. I'll phone my sister in Johannesburg. She's always full of good ideas". We are granted access to Mr Solomon's thoughts only insofar as he might share them with an acquaintance: we do not have the same sense of his interiority as we do of the primary characters.

In summary, the mental processes on the part of Zinzi's siblings are presented in passages written in the free indirect style. Other characters either express their thoughts in dramatic asides and soliloquies, or voice their thoughts through dialogue. Only Zinzi's thoughts are rendered in first person inner speech – in order to streamline access to her consciousness. Ironically perhaps, on returning to the screenplay after writing Zinzi's inner monologue, the screenplay now seemed rather thin where it came to delineating her imaginative and thought processes. We found ourselves returning to the novel, and having to re-strategise for alternative, or at least additional, techniques to convey in cinematic terms the inner life we had been describing in the book. For instance, we shifted some of the locations, so that

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Zinzi's quest came to include a journey to the iconic prison of Robben Island. Thus cinematic space is used to convey Zinzi's interior landscape: her entrapment by fear and emotional dereliction on her baby sister's disappearance.

7.7 Whose point of view?

Indeed, point of view is one of the most effective ways of reflecting interiority. It is useful in looking at the relationship between the film and the novel versions of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* to consider three questions that Stam poses in his essay "The Dialogics of Adaptation":

Does the film adaptation maintain the point of view and the focalisation of the novel? Who tells the story in the novel vis-à-vis the film? Who focalises the story – that is, who sees within the story? (72)

The answer is that both the film and the novel are largely told from Zinzi's point of view, so it is mostly she who focalises the narrative. Even when all the children are present, such as in the following passage, we experience the world through Zinzi's perspective:

To cheer them up, Zinzi has taken them to the park for a Sunday outing. Now she sits alone on the seesaw, her little rucksack with spare beads and cotton on her back, and her scissors balanced on her knees. She looks longingly at the others playing. Sam is showing Leila how to flip herself over a jungle gym bar. *I'd so like to play too. As if. Tomorrow is rent day.*
(Draft novel)

Correspondingly, the script indicates the need for a point of view shot when Zinzi looks up to see the others playing. Yet, although there is a privileging of Zinzi's perspective, there are times in both the film and novel when point of view shifts.¹²⁹ At the funeral, we have Vuyo looking up to see the eagle

¹²⁹ There are films that tell an entire narrative from one perspective. Claude-Edmonde Magny writes about how film borrows from the novel "its most specific and most traditional methods of narration", referring to first person narration (23). Magny cites an early example of a film shot unrelentingly from one point of view, namely *Lady in the Lake* (1946: dir. Robert Montgomery). The camera is constantly in the place of the hero, "showing us things as they

silhouetted against the cloud – prefiguring his own quest to find the eagles. The narrative point of view also shifts away from Zinzi for more sustained periods during Vuyo and Sam's solo adventures on the mountain. And there are moments when we share Leila's point of view: only she sees the winking of the two-headed dog, suggesting that she enjoys a peculiarly magical perspective on the world, concomitant with her small-child status.

So the story is not focalised through Zinzi alone. Indeed, film can also invite identification with the villain via point of view shooting, and a degree of focalisation from the Boondogle's perspective is critical in raising the stakes in both the script and the novel. Thus the Boondogle's dramatic aside about his plans for Leila is shot from his high angle point of view:

- ON THE JUNGLE GYM

The Boondogle flexes his biceps - bulging more than ever.

BOONDOGLE'S POV: He leers down at Zinzi cradling Leila in her arms.

BOONDOGLE

Leila is her precious thing:
The perfect final offering.

(Appendix: draft screenplay 45)

There is also the "stalker" shot of the Boondogle watching the children from their window, which enhances identification with the children and their fear:

EXT. OUTSIDE WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Nobody sees the Boondogle's hairy face squashed up against the window. He strokes his hairy neck and eyes Zinzi's mother's beads.

BOONDOGLE

Those shining jewels would look most fine
Around this noble neck of mine!

(Appendix: draft screenplay 30)

There is something eerie about being watched without knowing it, and cinema naturally capitalises on both voyeurism and the fear of being watched

appear to him, without our ever being allowed to see him except when he looks at himself in a mirror" (Magny 23).

unaware in ways that novels cannot. Focalisation on the part of the antagonist positions the audience as having more information than the protagonists, which escalates suspense.¹³⁰

Although at times the Boondogle as villain and Zinzi's siblings focalise the story, we did not want extensive multiple focalisation to dilute the core identification with Zinzi's journey. Thus we cut the following paragraph in the novel, and its correspondent scene in the film:

Some kids in the park see the sad foursome traipsing home in their funeral clothes. Hanging from the jungle gym bars, they each imagine life without their mother to call them home and scold them for being late and dirty. But as Zinzi and the others pass by, the kids shake the impossible thought from their minds, and play more vigorously than before.

(Draft novel)

The objective behind cutting the scene is to align the audience more firmly with Zinzi and her siblings' suffering – so that the viewer does not witness it from "outside", as a passer-by might do. In other words, the purpose is to create empathy rather than sympathy in the child audience.

Whelehan believes that point of view and focalisation are essential to shaping the text and creating atmosphere; yet she argues that it is much more difficult to signify ownership of the gaze through the camera lens than it is through first- or third-person narrative (10). I do not agree with Whelehan's position, given the power of point of view shooting in determining who "owns" the gaze; yet I do concede that the layered gaze of camera, spectator, director and character can complicate this "ownership". Certainly, novelistic narration is able to create a segue from one authorial voice to another, and from one viewpoint to another. Yet, Jane Stadler maintains that film's ability to create rich, shifting and multilayered modes of intersubjective identification via manipulation of sonic and visual point of view, and through *mise-en-scène* and music, is precisely its great strength as a medium of communication (237-48).

¹³⁰ In considering focalisation on the part of the antagonist, it is worth noting Gaut's assertion in "Identification and Emotion in Narrative Film": although the point of view shot is often thought of as the locus of character identification in film; it is, in fact the locus of perceptual identification (265). He cites the example of a shot in a horror film taken from the killer's point of view, as demonstrating that "there is no necessary tendency to empathize with the character whose visual perspective we imaginarily occupy" (265).

According to Stam, Flaubert allows us “to slide from one zone of subjectivity to another”, but he never lets us “lose consciousness of the mediating narration” (*Literature through Film* 152). Although the slippage between perspectives may be less fluid in cinema, the mediating narration is nonetheless always present. Brian McFarlane, for one, sees all films as being in a sense omniscient:

Even when they employ a voice-over technique as a means of simulating the first-person objective approach, the viewer is aware... of a level of objectivity in what is shown, which may include what the protagonist sees but cannot help including a great deal else as well. (18)

It may, however, be argued that the camera’s objective mode of “seeing” does not counteract true subjectivity in film. Vivian Sobchack discusses the intersubjective layering of cinema throughout her work on phenomenology. In *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*, Sobchack theorises intersubjectivity in terms of “how human beings co-constitute a sense not only of their own subjectivity but also of the subjectivity of others who are not themselves” (296). She maintains that cinema effects a technologically mediated form of intersubjectivity that *augments* that which is offered in both human perception and literary prose (296).

Admittedly, camera point of view working in isolation – particularly where camera placement very self-consciously emulates a character’s perspective – can run the danger of drawing unwanted attention to the camera. The viewer is then overly conscious of the camera’s presence, rather than being placed on an empathetic level “in the character’s shoes”. Ownership of the gaze is only one aspect of conveying inner processes. Camera point of view must necessarily work in conjunction with other aspects of *mise-en-scène* and with sound in order to portray subjective states.

7.8 Dollying in to consciousness

One aspect of *mise-en-scène* that can connote the transition into inner experience is camera movement. The forward tracking shot, in particular, can be used in order to evoke what Stam calls the “‘dolly in’ to consciousness” (*Literature through Film* 150). Hence the screenplay’s version of Zinzi slipping into her dream came to entail moving in towards Zinzi’s face:

Zinzi yawns, her eyes closing momentarily. She jerks them open - but they soon close again. Her hands keep beading, as if in auto-drive. We home in on her face, as she slips into a waking nightmare...

(Appendix: draft screenplay, 16)

The term “home in on” suggests a forward movement made most readily possible via a forward tracking/ dolly shot, or alternatively via a zoom. I usually prefer the tracking shot, given that its change in perspective is more akin to that of the human eye when we move towards our object of enquiry, and does not therefore feel so startling or mechanical as can the zoom. In this case the track is meant to mimic the mental process of Zinzi withdrawing into her own head – into her own dream.

In a similar vein, Stam discusses the way in which Alain Resnais, in making *Hiroshima Mon Armour* (1959) exploits the resources of cinema to communicate mental processes:

Relentless forward tracking shots, for example, embody the oxymoronic backward/ forward thrust of memory and consciousness by moving, thanks to the editing, across the space of two geographically distinct cities. (*Literature through Film* 277)

Resnais symbolically links two cities via camera movement, whereas my use of the track towards Zinzi has a different intent. Still, Resnais forges connections between mental and cinematic processes, in a manner Stam deems “analogous to the condensations and displacements typical of the ‘dream work’” (*Literature through Film* 277). This takes us back to Chapter 3 on dreams, in which – evoking Freud – I consider how dreams could be

captured in films via images that condense or displace. The notion of camera movements that can do the same is enormously fertile in the search for means to screen interiority. Stam cites Deleuze's claim that film too can be a philosophical instrument, "a generator of concepts which renders thought in audiovisual terms, not only in language but also in blocks of movement and duration" (*Literature through Film* 277).

Part of the sequence in which Zinzi "dreams up" the Boondogle could be rendered as a long tracking shot that moves parallel to the action. Starting by tracking the dolphin in the bead river, the camera would continue its seamless move as the dolphin is displaced by the baboon, and, in turn, by the eagle. Zinzi leaps up just as the bead river carries Leila off, so punctuating the end of the tracking shot – at which point we cut to a medium close-up of her jolting out of her nightmare. The track could effectively condense Zinzi's mental images of the three animals into one progressive shot, prefiguring their amalgamation in the mutant Boondogle. The track would capture Zinzi's flowing and mutating dream-fantasy through camera movement. The sliding planes of movement characteristic of limited animation would also be effective. If the dream were shot with a live action Zinzi, she could be placed on a dolly and moved parallel to the action, rather than – or in addition to – putting the camera on tracks. This would achieve a sense of slippage, as in the sliding planes of animation in Satoshi Kon's *Perfect Blue*.

7.8 Gut emotion

Tracking shots, and the placement of characters within sliding planes of action, are means of aligning the viewer to a character's inner mental space. There is also the potential within cinema to convey a character's palpable corporeality, which is, in turn, often integrally connected with the character's emotions.¹³¹ The novel occasionally describes Zinzi's feelings in bodily terms, for instance at the funeral, "She feels as if her heart will explode in her chest.

¹³¹ In "Film, Emotion, and Genre", Noël Carroll discusses the connection between emotion and bodily experience: "If one reflects on the states that we paradigmatically think of as emotional, one is first struck by the fact that they involve feelings – sensations of bodily changes, like muscle contractions, often attended by phenomenological qualities, such as being 'uptight'" (219).

Her eyes feel hot, she wants to cry". Film is particularly well equipped to convey this kind of haptic experience;¹³² in fact, Stam sees films as "more directly implicated in bodily response than are novels":

They are felt upon the pulse, whether through the in-your-face gigantism of close-ups [...], the visual impact of "flicker effects," or the vertiginous effect of Cinerama-style roller-coaster sequences, or the bodily register or jiggly, hand-held camera movements or "thrill cam" plunges [...]. Kinetic and kinaesthetic, films can provoke physical nausea or mental disorientation. (*Literature and Film* 6)

I am particularly interested in the mental effects that film can create through the corporeal, and especially in audience identification through visceral effects. Stam discusses a passage in *Madame Bovary*, in which Emma returns to normal consciousness after a sexual swoon, in which the novel speaks of her "beating heart" and the "vibrations of her throbbing nerves" (*Literature through Film* 158-9). Stam questions how a film might try to achieve the same effect; for example, "through dappled forest light, or perhaps through a milkily sensuous kind of a music" (*Literature through Film* 159). ✎

Certainly, music and also the sound track should work in conjunction with lighting to convey interiority in the filmed funeral scene of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. "The wind rattles the gum trees" cues a disconcerting sound track, to endorse the mood set by the mournful singing. But furthermore, the physical sensation described in the novel of the earth that hits the coffin "jolting in Zinzi's head" can be conveyed through the sound design: for if the jolting seems to reverberate in our own heads, we are able to project it onto Zinzi's experience. It is my hope that the rhythmic thuds of the earth hitting the coffin would convey a physical affinity, if not an equivalent, to the beating of Zinzi's heart – without recourse to a real heartbeat, a cinematic cliché. Lighting should reinforce Zinzi's inner experience: the scripted line "Dark

¹³² The work of Laura Marks is the most prominent in the field of "haptic" cinema. In *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* she indicates that "haptic perception is usually defined by psychologists as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies" (162). She compares "haptic perception" to "haptic *visuality*", whereby the eyes "function like organs of touch" (162).



Zinzi shuts her eyes as tightly as she can. Little coloured specks float before her, like those you see when squeezing your eyes against the sunlight. The patterns dance and sparkle, slowly becoming more round and solid.

Inside the children's bodies, their blood vessels seem to tie themselves into countless knots. Their ribs tighten, until all the breath has been crushed from their lungs and every bone in their bodies has turned to beads.

Gogo and the circle of women watch on in horror as the children's arms and legs jerk in all directions. Then an eerie change comes over the children, as their jerking limbs slow to a lifeless lull, and their skin shrivels and hardens before the women's eyes. Within a few moments, three lifeless dolls stand expressionless in the places where three living, breathing children had stood.

(Draft novel)

The "patterns of floating colour" described in the screenplay could be rendered effectively via animation, which I believe would create a subjective "inner eye" imagery that could not be evoked as directly in the novel. The novel appeals instead to the reader's visual memory of this phenomenon, or perhaps challenges eager readers to try the effect for themselves.

However, the novel, unlike the screenplay, intimately describes the children's bodily experience as their blood vessels turn into knots, their ribs tighten and their bones change to beads. Without a graphic cross section of the children, this precise effect would be tricky on film, even via animation. On the other hand, animation could fluidly capture the visual metamorphosis from child to effigy. Paul Wells, in an essay entitled "Thou Art Translated: Analysing Animated Adaptation", discusses the presence of animation within fairytale, where metamorphosis is about "changes in characters or situations that may be termed 'magical' or impossible within the concept of a real world served by physiological, gravitational or functional norms" (201). Conceivably, the animated transition from children to effigies, in its magical immediacy, constitutes a graphic equivalent for the corporeal experience of blood and bone described in the novel. The descriptions of physical sensation are requisite in the novel, to convey with sufficient immediacy the transformation that the children undergo. Thus both novel and film have the capacity to convey corporeal experience, but they necessarily utilise techniques appropriate to their respective media.

Wells puts forward that many animators, when working on an adaptation, enjoy moving beyond “the limits of language” to evoke feelings and establish the meanings that they perceive to exist within established texts (“Thou Art Translated” 200). Speaking of the shifts that take place between words and animation, Wells suggests:

These shifts simultaneously encompass the movement from interiority (conscious thought, memory, dream etc.) to exteriority (verbal exchange, physical articulation etc.); from subjectivity to objectivity; from the private to the public.... (“Thou Art Translated” 200)

As I have argued throughout, I hope to employ animation precisely because of its capacity for exteriorising interiority. Animation is the medium via which the Boondogle – as a projection of Zinzi’s fear – comes to life in the film, and through which the imaginative realm of the Bead World is made concrete. Through animation, the film audience witnesses the Boondogle grow rampantly in size, in keeping with Zinzi’s mounting fear. Whereas the novel describes Zinzi’s inner thought processes in her interaction with the Boondogle, in the film it is the very morphing of the Boondogle that needs to speak to Zinzi’s fearful state of mind, and to mirror this fear in the viewer. I do not believe that the novel needs to be hindered in any way by what Wells calls “the limits of language” (“Thou Art Translated” 200), but rather that interiority in the novel is embedded in the words, which then need to find visual and verbal equivalents on the screen.

7.11 Conclusion

Clearly the screenplay and the novel versions of *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, however close they are in terms of plot, diverge significantly in depicting the characters’ inner states. What has become patently clear in re-writing the screenplay as a novel is the degree to which it is desirable that not only Zinzi, but also other characters’ inner thoughts be given voice. However, in order to maintain Zinzi’s privileged status as protagonist, and so as not to dilute her

own emotional journey, hers are the only thoughts that are presented as direct inner speech. In this way, we are granted more immediate access to her inner life than to those of her siblings, for whom the free indirect style is used. The mode of access to her siblings' thoughts, in turn, differs from the dramatic asides and dialogue used for secondary and antagonistic characters.

In order to underline interiority, the screenplay needs to contain embedded clues for cinematography, sound, music and editing. *Mise-en-scène* should work in conjunction with point of view in order to achieve focalisation, and, in turn, audience identification. In addition, specific camera movements are able to evoke mental processes. For one, the forward tracking shot can connote a "'dolly-in' to consciousness". For another, the sliding planes of movement used in limited animation can cue a slippage between realities or levels of consciousness. Film is particularly well equipped for conveying haptic, corporeal experience, which can align us viscerally with characters on screen. Animation in particular can draw us into the "mind's eye" of a character. And animation is also particularly useful for portraying fluid movement from one image to another – perhaps conveying in this way the instability and mutability of our mental processes, and of our imaginative projections.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis has broached the question of how a filmmaker might transform a character's inner journey into a cinematic experience. My work has harnessed the diverse frameworks of psychoanalysis and cognitive film theory, both for the purpose of detailed textual analysis and with the intention of reconceptualising creative praxis for filmmakers in a way that incorporates the insights of film theory. For one, my work on point of view and the gaze, and on Japanese *shōjo*, effectively revitalises a long tradition of feminist film theory, incorporating it into the background of my work. This is bolstered by the insights of cognitive theories of focalisation in film, and is invested with fresh relevance by being fed into the production of film texts for the next generation.

My decision to bridge theory and praxis means that my research was necessarily determined by the requirements of the practical project at hand. Zinzi as a character dreams, fantasises, thinks and feels, and embarks on a quest that symbolically communicates her emotional journey. She neither hallucinates, nor does she – in the film version of the story – actively remember. Thus the thesis has not explored aspects of interiority such as hallucination and memory, but has focused rather on dream, fantasy, thought and emotion. There is, in fact, a substantial body of theoretical work on the act of remembering in film.¹³³ Still, I do believe that there is room for a study of practical means of screening memory. Screened hallucination would be another fascinating topic for research, especially given the recent spate of films about drug culture, and cinema's capacity to use special effects to articulate such experiences.

¹³³ A particularly useful academic study of screening memory is Maureen Turim's *Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History*, 1989.

8.1 Rehabilitating dreams

After laying out my compatablist methodology and theoretical framework in Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 I set about countering the common caution in screenwriting guides against portraying dreams. Through an examination of four films that successfully implement oneiric sequences, the chapter rehabilitated dreams as one means to access characters' innermost psychic states. The research revealed the rich filmic potential of working with the concepts of condensation and displacement, linked through psychoanalytical film theory to metaphor and metonymy respectively. Notions of the Freudian uncanny concerned with repetition, with the double, and with the effacement of the line between reality and imagination, were shown to create the disarming effect of dreams. The research confirmed that animation is a potent medium with which to achieve the uncanny repetitiveness, metamorphoses and otherworldliness of dreams. I hope that the findings will encourage filmmakers to return to proven yet non-hackneyed techniques, as well as to experiment with new methods of creating evocative cinematic dreams.

In terms of my own work on *Zinzi and the Boondogle*, the research suggested practical ways to make manifest Zinzi's mental processes: firstly by means of her single but far-reaching dream; secondly through the dream-like Bead World that she traverses; and thirdly via the Boondogle as a dream composite, whose reality status is ambiguous.

A future study of cinematic dream could take as its starting point Joel Black's assertion that "movies today are increasingly less concerned with showing the dreams of characters than with thematizing the apparatus that makes such oneiric eavesdropping possible" (216).¹³⁴ Does this recurring theme in contemporary cinema indicate a deep-seated fear of "The Media" as all-pervasive? In addition, Jonathan Schell asks to what extent our "ability to manufacture what we call virtual reality" allows us to create a secondary

¹³⁴ Black mentions the following films as tracing the development of mind-reading or brainwashing technology: *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004: dir. Jonathan Demme), *True Lies* (1994: dir. James Cameron), *Total Recall* (1990: dir. Paul Verhoeven), *Virtuosity* (1995: dir. Brett Leonard), *Strange Days* (1995: dir. Kathryn Bigelow), and *Until the End of the World* (1991: dir. Wim Wenders) (216).

world that we are liable to mistake for the primary one (cited in Black 218-9). Research that engaged with such questions would reflect the *zeitgeist* of our era, and could furthermore test Black's assertion that, more than entertainment or infotainment, the movies as "a mass-mediated, collective dream life are now constitutive of 'life' itself" (219).

8.2 Slipping into the unconscious

There is scant literature – theoretical or practical – on combining the media of live action and animation. In order to compare Švankmajer's feature films to more commercial films that use both media, Chapter 4 drew on psychoanalytic film theory, together with close neo-formalist analysis. The chapter concluded that the interaction of live action and animation in Švankmajer's work portrays an interpenetration between conscious and unconscious. On a broader level, the chapter proposes that animation has the ability to extend and transform the reality of live action. This notion provides a useful framework for examining how animation is used to transform reality in other ways too. For example, animation in combination with live action evokes drug-altered states of mind in Terry Gilliam's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998) and virtual worlds in Robert Rodriguez's *Spy Kids 3D* (2003).

The analyses pinpointed the precise moments of transition between live action and animation, to identify means of slipping between the real and magical worlds in *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. Švankmajer's films offer a wealth of imaginative, low-budget means to move across conscious and unconscious realms, and to express interior states: the animation of objects, sound transitions, rhythmical montage, fast dissolves, form edits and the use of portals.

In identifying the means by which Švankmajer combines live action and animation, I draw comparisons with the techniques used in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* and *Monkeybone*. Yet far more cutting-edge techniques of combining live action and Computer Graphic Imagery (CGI) are constantly being developed. For this reason, a fertile area of study would be that of CGI within a live action context. If, for instance, *Lord of the Rings* were taken as a case

study, intriguing comparisons could be drawn between the original rotoscoped version made in 1978,¹³⁵ directed by Ralph Bakshi, and the trilogy of 2001, 2002 and 2003, directed by Peter Jackson. Given that the recent trilogy used the most state-of-the-art CGI, the comparisons with the original would measure just how far the industry has come in terms of merging human and magical elements. The comparisons might also gauge whether or not – when there is so convincing a virtual reality – anything is lost in terms of audience engagement. Finally, because the novels of *Lord of the Rings*, as well as of *Harry Potter* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* are so popular, it would be useful to consider how the blending of live action and animation is specifically constructed to meet the audience desire for a faithful, paradoxically “realistic” version of the source material.

8.3 Otherworldly journeys

Chapter 5 examined how Hayao Miyazaki, through his *anime* fantasies, transports his viewers on journeys into other realms, which simultaneously articulate internal, emotional voyages on the part of his characters. The research drew particularly on the work of Bertold Bettelheim to argue that Miyazaki’s fantasies could help children in the audience to come to terms with the challenges faced in their own journeys towards adulthood. The chapter also indicated means by which animators could use formal elements to convey interiority. It is my hope that other South African filmmakers, both in the live action and animation fields, might consider the use of fantasy – grounded in psychological realism – to help children face the obstacles barring their way in the world.

Miyazaki’s treatment of fantasy tropes – such as the portal, doubling, and the absence of parents – are particularly germane to *Zinzi and the Boondogle*. I suggested that, just as Miyazaki creates magical worlds that respond to his *shōjo* characters’ psychological requirements, in the same way the Boondogle’s world is a response to Zinzi’s need to overcome her fear. Zinzi’s quest, which

¹³⁵ Traditional rotoscoping involves each animation cell being drawn over a film frame of an actor or live action setting – a technique that is, in a sense, akin to blending live action and animation.

takes her to the ocean depths and into the Bead World, should then visually and symbolically represent her inner process as she overcomes her fear.

The chapter investigated how Miyazaki's magical realms communicate – on a metaphorical level – his characters' coming of age narratives. An interesting study would entail extending the research question to other *anime* directors, or to the area of children's animation in general. Moreover, a fertile area of film/cultural studies would be to implement a broad comparison between Japanese and American animation styles, in both stylistic and ideological terms. Whereas adult animation is mainstream in Japan, in America and Europe, animation is seen as the preserve of children's film and television – as it is in South Africa. Interrogating the assumptions whereby animation is "relegated" to children's film could be effective in dispelling the notion that animation is in anyway unsophisticated, or inferior to live action cinema.

8.4 Animating Africa

Chapter 6 undertook a comparative study of three animated children's films – *either made or set in Africa* – in order to explore the aesthetics of cultural expression in conjunction with the aesthetics of subjective perception.

Drawing on literature about oral storytelling, the chapter investigated the ways in which these animated narratives are able to externalise the realm of the imagination. The research suggested that African animated features are potentially able to draw on aspects of cultural expression, and on the lore around liminal zones and parallel realms, in order to create narratives that reflect imaginative processes – usually visible only within the "mind's eye". The research also uncovered some of the disjunctions and anomalies that can arise from the intersection of African and European cultural practices. A key recommendation to emerge is that local animators should distinguish their work from bigger-budget Hollywood fare through striving for a unique vision and an African branding. However, at the same time these filmmakers need to consider accessibility and the demands of the international market.

Using *Zinzi and the Boondogle* as a case in point, I asked how one sets about making a South African film that is authentic, not only with regard to

aesthetics and language, but also in terms of its narrative and theme. Given that the film is at its heart about child-headed households, it is crucial that the story portrays a contemporary picture of African society – one that is geographically and socially grounded. Combined with this element of realism, the cinefantastic element common to much African cinema offers potent means to “film the unfilmable” alternatives to everyday reality.

The chapter mentioned schemes afoot to develop a national animation culture in South Africa, for instance the Animation Production Training Initiative, established in 2005. Tracking the development of such projects would constitute timely and valuable research. A particularly pertinent question is whether or not new African animation creates a local look, as in “junkmation”, or aspires to the Western aesthetics to which audiences are accustomed. Such a study could extend to the role of co-productions, for example those with Canada, a country with both a long-standing animation industry and a co-production agreement with South Africa. It would be worth evaluating to what extent, if any, the demands made by co-production influence the creation of an authentic African aesthetic.

8.5 Adapting “in reverse”

Cinema was shown in Chapter 7 to be, like literature, entirely able to convey interior states – albeit by different means. The chapter inverted adaptation theory, as it were, to consider the process of re-writing the screenplay of *Zinzi and the Boondogle* as a novel, focusing on the depiction of the characters’ inner states. The findings suggested that, whereas the novel is able to communicate interiority via direct means, the screenplay needs subtly and systematically to embed clues for cinematography, sound, music and editing in order to access inner states to the same extent. *Mise-en-scène* should work in conjunction with point of view in order to achieve focalisation, which can enhance audience identification. In addition, specific camera movements are able to evoke mental processes, and animation is a particularly powerful means of drawing the spectator into the interior space of a character.

While Chapter 3 identified screenwriting manuals that rail against the use of oneiric representation, the research in Chapter 7 revealed some of the other prejudices that proliferate about film's inability to express interior states. Given that many of these biases are echoed in screenwriting guides, I believe that there is a call for a systematic review of advice administered by their authors – often self-appointed scriptwriting gurus. Granted, the conventional wisdom is often useful, but sometimes the pedagogy is unnecessarily inhibiting for the fledgling screenwriter, and detrimental to the industry as a whole – as the three-act structure, action-driven plot, and ultimate return to the *status quo* are preserved as sacrosanct. These manuals could also be critiqued in terms of their cultural hegemony, in which the diversity of world cinema is paid no heed, and the contemporary Hollywood blockbuster is held up as the only worthy goal.

8.6 Coda

My research has attempted to identify ways in which filmmakers can externalise interiority on the screen. The impetus to undertake the study emerged out of a deep respect for what film at its best can do: entertain, inspire, teach, humour, uplift, even transport us to other worlds. This prowess is rooted partly in film's ability to make tangible – visually and aurally – the innermost dreams, thoughts and emotions of screen characters. This thesis has pointed to a few of the ways in which filmmakers might explore the human conscious and unconscious to create stories that not only entertain, but touch us to our very core.

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Appendix

the screenplay

Zinzi and the Boondogle

by Meg Rickards and Jane Coombe

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by

Meg Rickards and Jane Coombe

Draft 6

February 2007

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meghelix@mweb.co.za

6 Lee Road, Claremont, 7708, Cape Town, South Africa

+ 27 (0)78 181 5259 / + 27 (0)21 671 7741

In the silent shop, next to the till, stands a chunky beaded two-headed dog, its identical heads facing in different directions. Its body bristles with nails that stick out from between the beads, and its four mirror eyes glint in the moonlight. With a creak, the two heads twist towards one another.

DOG HEAD ONE

It is nearly time...

DOG HEAD TWO

Time. For the New Year to begin,
and with it a new story.

DOG HEAD ONE

Story. A story of treacherous
tasks and trickery.

DOG HEAD TWO

Trickery. Of loss and of
heartache.

DOG HEAD ONE

Ache. We will see four children
come and go.

DOG HEAD TWO

Go. But we'll be here.

DOG HEAD ONE

Here. We are always here.

DOG HEADS ONE AND TWO

Watching.

A bird's eye perspective of Cape Town - a sparkling wonderland of lights: Table Mountain in its sheen of light, the harbour lights doubled in the water.

We descend into Hartley Road in the area of Zonnebloem. The narrow road wends its way up the steep hillside, jammed with rickety cars parked head to tail on the kerb.

Lining the road on either side, the pastel-painted houses are built closely together - peeling and ramshackle. Christmas lights are strung across the windows that face the street, where a big party is pumping.

A CROWD OF REVELLERS is watching a TROUPE OF MINSTRELS pass by. The minstrels, with painted faces and satin suits, sing and play banjos and brass. A group of CHILDREN tag along with the troupe, singing and dancing. Dogs yap alongside.

Leaning on a gate outside a down-at-heel Cape Victorian house, watching the procession, is the slight figure of a twelve-year-old girl - ZINZI - with beaded braids pulled back, exposing her thoughtful eyes.

Playing a trombone in the procession is an upright, thick-set, kind-looking man, MR SOLOMON (50). He moves to the edge of the procession and turns to play a few melancholic bars in the direction of Zinzi. She gives him a sad smile of acknowledgement. Mr Solomon doffs his cap and joins the procession again.

Two twelve-year-old girls dressed up for the night - Zinzi's GIRLFRIENDS - jive along to the music. They beckon vigorously for her to join them but she shakes her head and gestures with her head to the house behind her. They wave and move on together.

Zinzi spots her three siblings in the jostling crowd and, putting on a brave smile, she waves at them as they dance up the road towards her.

VUYO (10) moves wildly to a music in his own head. Tall for his age, with his skinny jeans, dark-rimmed glasses and unruly hair, he looks like a gangly bird struggling to take flight.

SAM (8) is a sturdy little boy, with a number 2 haircut. He wears shorts, a torn tee-shirt, and a superman cape around his neck. Sam mischievously grins as he dodges people in the crowd to catch up with his little sister LEILA (3).

Leila, a tiny ball of volatility, giggles with delight. Her springy curls bounce around her neck and frame her soft, chubby face. She lifts up her battered TEDDY BEAR so that he won't miss any of the action.

REVELLERS

Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven, Six,
Five...

As the countdown gathers energy, Zinzi sinks into herself with a deep sigh.

REVELLERS

Four, Three, Two, One... HAPPY NEW
YEAR!

Fireworks explode in fountains of light. Zinzi forgets herself for a moment and gazes up at the explosions lighting up the mountain.

A shrill voice cuts through Zinzi's reverie.

J.

MRS VALENTINE
Don't you know what time it is?
It must be after midnight! What a
racket!

MRS VALENTINE (40), the children's landlady, beats a path through the crowd with her pink umbrella. She wears red high heels and a clinging knee-length evening dress, accentuating her multiple curves. Her hair is in a bouffant style.

MRS VALENTINE
Out of my way! Can't you idiots
look where you're going?

Her umbrella knocks a cup of coffee from GOGO's hand. Gogo (60) wrinkled, wiry and vigorous, perches on a low garden wall between two other women, who clasp mugs, a picnic basket at their feet.

MRS VALENTINE
You lot are still up? I expect
you at the shop - eight sharp!

Mrs Valentine click-clacks towards the gate, where Zinzi is standing. Zinzi steps back to make way for her.

ZINZI
Evening, Mrs Valentine.

Mrs Valentine stops to point a finger at the procession.

MRS VALENTINE
It was impossible getting home
through that lot. Skollies!

Zinzi turns her back on Mrs Valentine and rolls her eyes complicitly in Gogo's direction. Gogo flashes Zinzi a warm smile.

Zinzi turns quickly at the sound of her mother's weak voice, coming from inside their home - a converted garage attached to Mrs Valentine's house.

3 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - AFTER MIDNIGHT

3

MOTHER
Happy New Year, Zinzi!

Zinzi's MOTHER lies in a single bed, painfully frail. She wears spectacles, which are attached to an intricately beaded string around her neck.

Zinzi investigates the medicine bottles on the window ledge. She gives pills and a glass of water to her mother and watches anxiously to see that she swallows each pill.

Leaning on a gate outside a down-at-heel Cape Victorian house, watching the procession, is the slight figure of a twelve-year-old girl - ZINZI - with beaded braids pulled back, exposing her thoughtful eyes.

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MOTHER (CONT'D)

Thank you Zinzi. You've been such
a good nurse all this time.

Her mother removes her spectacles and looks into Zinzi's
eyes.

MOTHER

Zinzi, I'm very tired.

ZINZI

But Mama, your fever's gone down.

MOTHER

So did your father's before he
died.

ZINZI

That doesn't mean anything!

Her mother closes her eyes for a moment, before opening
them once more.

MOTHER

I know you must be frightened.

Zinzi shakes her head vigorously. She snatches up the
bottles of pills and bangs them back on the windowsill,
where she fusses over their order.

Her mother pats the bed next to her, and Zinzi returns to
the bed, and sits down - her shoulders hunched.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Zinzi, it's time we talked.

Zinzi gives a reluctant nod.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You know I haven't been able to
rely on our relatives since your
father died. When I go, Zinzi,
you'll be alone with the
children.

Zinzi stares down, twisting a braid around her finger.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

What keeps me awake at night is
the thought of you all out on the
street, hungry and cold.

Zinzi looks up and stops twisting her braid.

ZINZI

I won't let that happen!

J.

Zinzi's mother leans forward.

MOTHER

I worry that they might split you up. I need to know that you will do everything you can to keep the family together.

ZINZI

I will, Mama.

Her mother holds Zinzi's gaze.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I promise.

Her mother falls back against the pillow, relieved.

MOTHER

Thank you.

Zinzi throws her arms around her mother's neck, bursting into tears.

ZINZI

But Mama, I won't know what to do.

MOTHER

Listen to your heart. It will guide you.

Zinzi lies in silence next to her mother. They speak in a murmur.

ZINZI

But I can't hear it.

Her mother picks up Zinzi's hand and holds it to Zinzi's heart.

MOTHER

You won't hear your heart. You'll feel it. Close your eyes.

Zinzi closes her eyes. She shakes her head.

ZINZI

All I feel is frightened. I can't feel anything else.

Zinzi's mother leans forward.

MOTHER

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Zinzi closes her eyes. She shakes her head.

ZINZI

All I feel is frightened. I can't feel anything else.

4 EXT. HARTLEY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

4

Vuyo, Sam and Leila are in the thick of the jostling procession, Vuyo holding tightly onto Leila's hand. Squeals of anticipation rise up in the crowd.

Fiercely painted men, wearing war paint and feathers, charge through - parting the crowd - scattering children who shriek excitedly, running for their mothers arms.

Sam imitates a man with a particularly fierce face, lunging and roaring.

The men mock-threaten the kids, every now and again swooping to pick up a child, before returning them to the crowd.

One of the men grabs Leila from Vuyo. Leila clutches Teddy tightly and giggles with delight as the man throws her up into the air, making menacing faces and bellowing all the while.

5 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - 1 A.M.

5

Zinzi's mother is sleeping.

Next to her, Zinzi has nearly completed a red ribbon-shaped badge. A saucer of little red beads lies next to her on the bed.

Vuyo, Sam and Leila burst through the front door and hurl themselves onto the bed, knocking over the saucer of beads. Zinzi jumps up.

ZINZI

You're so clumsy!

Vuyo hangs his head, shame-faced. Sam mocks Zinzi -

SAM

You're so mumsy!

Their mother opens her eyes, weary.

MOTHER

Children...

Zinzi glares at Sam, as she plucks beads out of the blanket's folds.

ZINZI

(mutters to herself)

It's so easy for them. Don't they see what's going on?

SAM

Did you see the fireworks, Mama?

MOTHER

No, Sam, but I sure heard them...

Sam flings his arms in all directions, making explosive noises.

LEILA

Like fai-wy stars, Mama!

Leila nestles her head in her mother's lap.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Lots and lots of stars. One, two,
fwee - um - one hun-dwed, fifty,
a fousand!

Her mother mouths to Zinzi.

MOTHER

Look after my baby.

Zinzi nods, squaring her shoulders.

VUYO

I drew a picture for you...

Vuyo tears out of his exercise book a drawing of exploding sparks.

MOTHER

It's gorgeous Vuyo... put it where
I can see it.

Vuyo pierces the picture onto a nail on the wall and goes to sit by his mother. Sam bounces around until his mother puts a hand on his leg and he settles down. Their mother draws them all close.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Happy New Year, my darling
children.

Fighting back the tears in her eyes, Zinzi pulls away from her mother's arms and goes to the doorway. Her slight figure stands alone, outside the circle of warmth.

Zinzi stares across the crowd and over the row of rooftops towards the harbour lights. The tears in her eyes reflect the fireworks exploding outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

6

EXT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

6

Zinzi stands alone with tears in her eyes.

The gum trees rattle and creak in the wind.

Leila and Sam hang on either side of Vuyo. Leila holds her Teddy. Sam scuffs his best shoes in the dirt, with little repetitive kicks.

The children are part of a small GROUP OF MOURNERS, including Gogo whom we met in the opening scene. Her bead bangles slide on her arms as she sways, leading the singing. A beaded gourd swings from her white bead necklace.

Zinzi tries to sing along but her voice chokes up. She picks up Leila and draws her tight.

Gogo slips an ostrich egg bangle from her arm and places it on the coffin, which SEVERAL MEN are lowering into the grave on ropes.

Vuyo lifts his teary eyes from the coffin to the dark mountain. For a few moments, he gazes at an EAGLE, its great wings silhouetted against the cloud - swooping with the wind.

Shovels pat earth on the new grave. Hands lay down posies.

Vuyo moves a bouquet to anchor down a drawing of the four children with their mother and father, sitting around a table.

7

EXT. GRAVEYARD - A LITTLE LATER

7

- AT THE GATE

Zinzi politely receives condolences at the gate, while Vuyo awkwardly hangs back, tracing figures of eight in the sand with his foot.

- ACROSS THE GRAVEYARD

Sam and Leila have wandered off.

Leila is squatting in the dirt. She hums under her breath, breaking off every now and again to whisper in Teddy's ear. She wipes her tears and smears muddy streaks over her face and dress.

Sam slowly kicks a cooldrink can against the graveyard wall.

Gogo approaches Sam and Leila with a twinkling smile, and taking one child in each hand leads them over to the others. She draws the children into a group.

GOGO

I will miss your mother: she was like a daughter to me. We all loved her at the shop. She had a special way with the beads, and a gentle touch with people.

ZINZI

Thank you, Gogo.

GOGO

You know where to find me should you need anything at all.

Zinzi bristles, pulling Leila to her tensely.

ZINZI

We'll be okay.

Zinzi moves to leave, but Gogo draws her aside.

GOGO

You are frightened now, of course you are. But, Zinzi, there will come a day when you will face your fears.

ZINZI

Thanks, Gogo. We must go now.

Zinzi turns to leave, the others following her.

GOGO

You will be free then to listen to your heart. That is what your mother wanted for you, most of all.

Gogo's bead-covered gourd shimmers magically.

8

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

8

The sky is heavy with dark clouds.

Zinzi leads the way home up a long hill - the other three trailing behind.

They pass a park, where NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILDREN are playing - happy and carefree. Two of Zinzi's girlfriends are sitting giggling on a park bench. When they see Zinzi they stop abruptly and wave tentatively at Zinzi. She gives them a tight brave smile and then beckons to her siblings to catch with her.

They pass SOLOMON'S CORNER STORE where Mr Solomon - wearing an apron - appears in the doorway with a pot of soup, a loaf of bread and a can of pears, which he gives to the children.

Sam makes a big show of sniffing hungrily at the pot.

LEILA

Mistah Solomon, our mama's gone
to be wif daddy!

MR SOLOMON

Yes, I heard about your mother. I
am so sorry, children. She was a
good woman.

ZINZI

Thank you, Mr Solomon.

9 ZINZI'S HOME - DUSK

9

Rain runs down the windowpane and drums on the zinc roof.

Vuyo, Sam and Leila sit silently around the table, disturbed
only by the clink-clink of Sam's spoon as he mechanically
eats his soup.

Leila pushes crumbs at her Teddy's stitched mouth.

Vuyo eats half-heartedly while drawing a picture of his
mother - her spectacles hanging characteristically on their
beads.

Zinzi stands at the counter reading a book. Her soup and
bread remain untouched beside her.

They look up at a clattering of heels followed by a ring on
the doorbell. Zinzi quickly wipes the counter.

Zinzi looks through the peephole to see a distorted Mrs
Valentine - hair in curlers.

Zinzi opens up; Mrs Valentine backs in, shaking her UMBRELLA
outside.

MRS VALENTINE

Rain in summer! Something odd in
the air, I can feel it.

She hangs her umbrella and an enormous patchwork leather BAG
on a chair.

The kids barely look up.

SAM & VUYO

Evening, Mrs Valentine.

LEILA

Mama's not here! She's wif
Daddy.

MRS VALENTINE
(raises eyebrow)
Yes, children. I'm heart-sore
about that. I don't know what I'm
going to do without her at the
shop.

The children stare into their bowls.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)
I've brought you a present!

Sam and Leila's faces flicker with interest as Mrs
Valentine draws a calendar out of her bag - an advertising
freebie. January depicts Table Mountain.

SAM
(whispers)
Rubbish present. I saw them for
free at Bassodien's Butchery!

Zinzi snorts under her breath.

Leila pouts with disappointment.

Mrs Valentine hangs the calendar on the nail - mostly
obscuring Vuyo's fireworks drawing. Vuyo swallows hard.

Mrs Valentine whips Vuyo's pen out of his hand, and circles
every Monday in January.

MRS VALENTINE
The rent is due today. One hundred
every Monday.

The children gasp. Zinzi takes a jar down from the shelf and
empties it onto the table: a little pile of coins.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)
Siestog! That's pathetic! You can
ask anyone at the shop: I've got a
big heart - generous to a fault.

She pokes dismissively at the coins.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)
But I am not a charity! Just how
do you lot plan to pay your rent?

Leila pulls a necklace from under her shirt - a crazy lumpy
mix of colours.

LEILA
You can buy my neck-lace! I made
it.

The other children exchange glances, rolling their eyes.

MRS VALENTINE

(big sigh)

Ag shame! Something should be done about this motherless baby.

LEILA

I'm not a baby - I'm free!

Leila proudly shows three filthy fingers.

Mrs Valentine looks Leila over - her face is still stained with tears and mud.

MRS VALENTINE

You kids clearly can't take care of this baby.

Horrified, Zinzi pulls Leila towards her. Sam rushes to the windowsill and grabs a bunch of more stylish necklaces.

SAM

Zinzi and Vuyo did these this holiday! Helping Mama make things for your shop.

Mrs Valentine examines the items with interest.

MRS VALENTINE

I have enough necklaces, children.
(considers)

But, we happen to be making a new range of badges. I might have a couple here.

She scrabbles in her bag - throwing out a flurry of crumpled tissues stained with pink lipstick, a cellphone, a compact and a squishy banana. Zinzi wrinkles her nose.

Mrs Valentine checks her reflection in the compact mirror, and smiles - pleased with what she sees.

Mrs Valentine retrieves three badges that say I LOVE CAPE TOWN and which have designs either of a dolphin, a baboon or an eagle.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

The tourists love these. Dolphins for the sea, baboons for the mountain, eagles for the sky.

ZINZI

How many do you want for the rent?

MRS VALENTINE

One hundred. By tomorrow.

MRS VALENTINE

(big sigh)

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about this motherless baby.

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for the sea, baboons for the
mountain, eagles for the sky.

ZINZI

How many do you want for the rent?

MRS VALENTINE

One hundred. By tomorrow.

LEILA

What a lot!

VUYO

Impossible.

LEILA

(counting on her fingers)

One, two, fwee, fif-teen... a
hund-wed!

SAM

(bangs table)

It's not fair!

ZINZI

Shush, Sam.

Zinzi fixes Mrs Valentine firmly in the eye.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

We'll do it.

Mrs Valentine picks up her bag and umbrella.

MRS VALENTINE

Nine tomorrow then - at my shop.

10 EXT. ZINZI'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

10

Mrs Valentine click-clacks across to the main house,
muttering to herself.

MRS VALENTINE

If that lot makes the badges,
I'll eat my Sunday hat. Still, I
can't lose. When they turn up
without the badges, I will have
every excuse to throw them out. I
am sick of those noisy kids.

11 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

11

The children stare at the sample badges in gloomy silence.

SAM

Beading's not for boys!

Sam shoves the tin of beads across the table.

ZINZI

And I suppose it's cool for boys to
live on the street?

Sam thinks about it and shrugs.

SAM

Then only if I can do the baboons.

VUYO

It's a deal.

SAM

I saw them at Cape Point. Baboons
have got guts... They stole our
teacher's sandwich!

Sam bounces around the room scratching his armpits, then
tunes the radio to a funky song.

The children hunker down round the table and set to work,
whistling along to the radio.

Leila sorts the beads, painstakingly picking out one bead
at a time. Sam reaches over her, grabbing beads...

SAM

Leila! You're in the way!

LEILA

No! That's my job!

Leila swats Sam's hands away from the tin - and sends the tin
flying - beads showering the room.

SAM

Lei-laa!

Leila flings herself onto the couch, clutching Teddy and
sobbing. Vuyo goes to comfort Leila.

Zinzi turns on Sam, her eyes narrow, and hisses -

ZINZI

Didn't you hear Mrs Valentine? They
could take Leila away!

Zinzi looks at the table, strewn with scattered beads.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I give up.

The children stare aghast as Zinzi pulls a suitcase from on
top of a cupboard, throws it on the floor and opens it up.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

There's no way we can do the badges
by tomorrow. Let's get out of here
before they come for Leila.

Zinzi roughly piles clothes into the case.

Suddenly - DARKNESS and SILENCE as the lights and radio cut out. A sliver of light falls in from the street lamp.

SAM

It's so da - ark! I can't see!

Sam flings himself at Vuyo, burying his face in his chest.

Vuyo, Sam and Leila huddle together on the bed as Zinzi fumbles to locate matches.

Zinzi lights a candle on the bedside table, which illuminates Zinzi's mother's spectacles on their bead string. Zinzi detaches the spectacles and knots the beads around her neck.

ZINZI

I promised Mama I'd keep the family together.

Zinzi closes the suitcase.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

We're staying. Bed time everyone.

Sam lights another candle from the one on the shelf, and sets it by his bed before climbing in with a Superman comic.

Vuyo starts to pick up the scattered beads. Zinzi sits down on the couch to resume beading.

Leila - still clutching Teddy - sleepily lays her head in Zinzi's lap.

Vuyo watches Zinzi struggle to thread a needle in the candlelight.

VUYO

Zinzi, you must let me help. You can't do it all.

Zinzi looks up at Vuyo. She looks at the clock: it's after eight. She sighs, handing Vuyo a needle and thread, and making space for him on the couch.

A CLOSE-UP of a new candle...

DISSOLVES TO:

12

INT. ZINZI'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

12

A CLOSE-UP of a half candle.

Zinzi and Vuyo are both beading.

DISSOLVES TO:

13 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - EVEN LATER THAT NIGHT

13

A CLOSE-UP of a candle stub.

Only Zinzi is still beading.

Zinzi rubs her eyes, and looks at the others.

Vuyo has fallen asleep on the couch, his head on the armrest - squashing his glasses at an angle against his face.

Sam is asleep in bed, his Superman comic across his chest.

Leila is still curled with her head on Zinzi's lap.

Zinzi yawns, her eyes closing momentarily. She jerks them open - but they soon close again. Her hands keep beading, as if in auto-drive - while she slips into a waking nightmare...

14 EXT. STREET - DAY - ZINZI'S DREAM

14

Colour is over-saturated, bright and the figures ~~dis~~ distorted.

The four children are huddled on the pavement - clothes ragged, faces grimy. Leila lies with her head on Zinzi's lap.

All of a sudden, millions of beads bucket down from the sky. Leila starts to cry, and Zinzi quickly covers her face to protect her.

The road has become a rushing river of beads. A dolphin swims towards them, diving in and out of the colourful, swirling beads.

As the dolphin breaks the surface once more, it changes into a baboon, which springs onto the pavement and rushes barking towards the cowering children.

Just as the baboon reaches them, it changes into an eagle, which takes off on great, outspread wings.

The bead river washes Leila from Zinzi's lap. Zinzi leaps up after her -

15 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - AS BEFORE

15

Zinzi wakes with a jolt - tears in her eyes. Her sudden movement wakes Leila in her lap. Leila startles and whimpers, and Zinzi strokes her curls until she goes back to sleep.

Zinzi lifts up the badge in her other hand and sees that during her nightmare she has muddled the three creatures to make a mutant badge figure.

A frightened teardrop rolls down Zinzi's cheek and falls onto the badge in her hand.

Through the tear we see the beads of the badge shift and swell...

With a shriek and an explosion of light, the mutant figure inside the badge shakes itself, steps out of the badge - becoming three dimensional as he does so - and stands regally in Zinzi's hand. This is the BOONDOGLE.

This Boondogle is just a few centimeters tall: he has a hairy baboon's face, chest, and hind legs; the smooth tail and torso of a dolphin; and feathery eagle wings and talons.

Zinzi stares aghast at the Boondogle before vigorously shaking her hand to rid herself of him - but he hops onto the table where he triumphantly kicks the badge with the muddled image onto the floor.

Zinzi stares at him, rubbing her eyes in disbelief.

The Boondogle looks around the room, a broad grin breaking out on his tiny face, and punches the air with glee.

ZINZI

Hello?

The Boondogle clears his throat and replies elegantly -

BOONDOGLE

I beg your pardon. I've been rude.
I'm overwhelmed with gratitude!
Your fear has brought me down to earth
Tonight's the night of my re-birth!

ZINZI

I'm glad to have helped, um...
But who are you?

The Boondogle scratches his head and looks down at his body with a frown.

BOONDOGLE

I am creature from afar,
My newest shape is quite bizarre.

His face lights up and he claps happily.

BOONDOGLE

It's mine for now, all the same...
Yes! Boon-do-gle seems a perfect name!

He extends his tiny talon. Zinzi puts out her little finger, which he shakes enthusiastically.

ZINZI

I'm Zinzi, pleased to meet you,
Boon...boogle?

The Boondogle petulantly stamps his little foot and snaps -

BOONDOGLE

Boondogle!
(patronisingly slowly)
Baboon of guile and Dolphin swift,
Eagle fierce - I have each gift.

He demonstrates his features as he mentions each animal.

ZINZI

Oh, sorry! Mr Boon-do-gle. You
sure are talented...

The Boondogle grins playfully, does a little tap dance over to the unfinished badges, which he examines, talking over his shoulder.

BOONDOGLE

Well, not to brag, but do you know...
With beads like these I'm quite the pro!

ZINZI

What do you know about beads?

Zinzi looks doubtfully at the tiny creature, who puffs himself up to orate afresh, pacing theatrically up and down the table.

BOONDOGLE

From Afric's north to southern shore,
Stretching back to days of yore,
Beads have taken pride of place,
Wealth of kings, diviners' grace.

Zinzi listens intently - taking it all in.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Spells and curses, wishes, charms,
Magic that both helps and harms!
Lover's letters, trader's coin,
In beads you'll find these roles conjoin!

ZINZI

(smiling shyly)

Wow, quite impressive. I never
thought of beads that way.

But the Boondogle isn't listening. He's moved to the table edge to stare enchanted at the sleeping Leila - illuminated by the candlelight. Her little curls frame her soft face. Her Teddy is tucked in her arms.

The Boondogle points down at the suitcase and nods back at Leila.

BOONDOGLE

Too young to sleep out on the street:
No roof, no bed, no food to eat!

Zinzi gulps. Her eyes grow wide with fear.

ZINZI

My dream! How...?

The Boondogle looks at Zinzi's terrified face, grins and swells to double his size.

The Boondogle flexes his eagle wings and flies awkwardly over to the couch where he crash lands on the armrest, opposite to the side where Vuyo is sleeping. Teetering, he looks down at Leila.

Zinzi gasps and rushes after him.

ZINZI

Stay away from her!

The Boondogle grows a second time, to thirty centimeters tall, before flying back to the table.

BOONDOGLE

I've caused alarm, I do regret,
I'm here to play, you're not to fret!
I can make three wishes true:
So tell me - what is troubling you?

ZINZI

(mutters)

Leave me alone. I have a hundred of
these to make by morning.

Zinzi sits down before the handful of completed badges and takes up her beading.

The Boondogle smugly monitors her slow progress.

BOONDOGLE

A century? That's quite a ton -
To bat alone is not much fun.

Who's holding up the other end?
They're all asleep, you need a friend!

Zinzi looks at the Boondogle for a long moment, before reluctantly threading a second needle and handing it to him. But he snorts and gleefully throws it dart-like, to pierce Leila's Teddy, tucked in her arms.

Zinzi winces and inhales sharply. Seeing this, the Boondogle grows a third time, shooting up to the size of a small child - so that from his position on the table he looms right over Zinzi.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
I don't need your flimsy thread...
I'll use a magic spell instead!

He swishes his dolphin tail and flaps his wings.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Fear my ventricular lustrations
Hear these auricular cantations...

Zinzi stares as the piles of loose beads start to sparkle and move...

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Take our orbicular creations,
Make three particular collations!

On the word 'collations' - there is a CLICK as the beads fall into place and the handful of badges turns into a pile of one hundred. Zinzi picks up a badge in wonder, before digging into the pile and letting badges run through her hands.

ZINZI
Awesome!
(suddenly worried)
But how can I thank you?

BOONDOGLE
Comestibles would do for now...
Sustenance, grub, victuals, chow!

ZINZI
(jokingly)
You're throwing the whole
dictionary at me!

BOONDOGLE
My magic's only good for beads
But in this world, I've other needs...

Zinzi looks as confused as ever.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Come on Zinzi, food of course -
I'd quite gladly eat a horse!

ZINZI
I've got a little soup... Lentil
though, not horse!

The Boondogle grunts assent. Zinzi puts her abandoned bowl of soup in front of him on the table. He eyeballs her portion of bread on the counter.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
That's the only bread we've got! I
kept it for the children's
breakfast.

BOONDOGLE
The only bread? The cupboard's bare?
Well, not to worry - I can share.

Zinzi smiles in relief.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
But let me give you free advice,
More badges will fetch twice the price.

Zinzi looks at him questioningly. He jabs a talon at the pile of coins Zinzi emptied out of the jar when Mrs Valentine visited.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
A roof alone is not enough,
You'll soon need cash for food and stuff.

Zinzi nods in slow agreement.

The Boondogle picks up the bowl of soup and downs it in one long slurp.

Eyeing Zinzi defiantly, the Boondogle jumps from the table to the counter, where he wolfs down the bread in a second.

The Boondogle laughs delightedly at Zinzi's fury.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
I'll be back to help you bead -
A friend in need's a friend indeed.

Zinzi turns to the calendar.

ZINZI
Well, the rent is due every Monday -

But the Boondogle burps loudly, so the candle flame splutters and goes out. He vanishes in a flash of light.

Zinzi stares at the dark space where the Boondogle has been.

Vuyo sits up on the couch, flapping his hand before his nose.

VUYO
Gross, Zinzi!

Vuyo sees the badges and is gob-smacked. He takes off his glasses, rubs his eyes, and puts his glasses back on again. He runs his hands through the badges, shaking his head in wonderment.

Zinzi blows out the candle, picks Leila up and carries her to bed, and collapses next to her. Vuyo gets into the other bed with Sam, who grumbles and smacks his lips in his sleep.

VUYO (CONT'D)
Zinzi - how did you do it?

Zinzi rolls over into a foetal position, her back to Vuyo. Dawn light brightens the window, illuminating Zinzi, fast asleep.

16 EXT. HARBOUR - EARLY MORNING

16

The children walk alongside the water, past fishermen and brightly coloured boats.

Zinzi has her little rucksack on her back. Vuyo carries the badges in a basket.

VUYO
Zinzi. I can't believe you did
all hundred...

ZINZI
Come on, Vuyo! We're late.

Sam dribbles his ball rather close to the edge, Leila chasing behind.

ZINZI
Get away from the edge!

SAM
Just because you're scared of the
water...

Sam jumps down into a little rubber dinghy alongside a fishing boat. Leila climbs down after him.

LEILA
(singing)
Wo, wo, wo your boat...

ZINZI
Leila! Sam! Get out of there!

SAM
You're boring!

LEILA
You're not mama!

Zinzi swallows hard, and looks across the water, where a school of dolphins is playing.

17 EXT. SHOPS AT WATERFRONT - EARLY MORNING

17

The children walk through CROWDS OF SHOPPERS at the waterfront. They pass FLOWER SELLERS, DANCERS and MARIMBA MUSICIANS.

A troupe of MIME ARTISTS pose, their faces painted white, still as statues. A PASSER-BY tosses a coin into their hat, and immediately the mime artists jerk in unison into a new pose, before freezing again.

Sam stands, frustrated that the mime artists are no longer moving. He searches his pockets for a coin. Finding none, he surreptitiously removes a button from his shirt and throws it into the hat. There is no response from the troupe, but their leader makes an ugly face in derision.

Sam runs off after Zinzi, Vuyo and Leila, who are heading towards a shop, sandwiched between a spice shop and a fabric store.

The shop is labelled with a flamboyant sign: Mrs Valentine's Bead Curios. They enter the shop through a long curtain made out of red bead hearts.

18 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS

18

The shop is overflowing with beaded items. Vuyo stands entranced by a fierce mask staring down from the wall. Sam swats him with a ceremonial fly whisk.

Leila looks up at the two-headed dog that stands by the till. She lifts her teddy to greet one head and then the other. She stands on tiptoe to stroke it and suddenly both heads wink down at her. Smiling shyly, she struggles to wink back, twisting her face with the effort.

Zinzi twirls her braid around her finger, while she waits for Mrs Valentine, who is glued to her cell phone.

Seated in the back of the shop, a circle of FIVE WOMEN, including Gogo, sing as they bead. Gogo comes across to Zinzi.

GOGO
It must have been a hard night
after the funeral.

ZINZI
 (defensive)
 We're fine, Gogo.

Zinzi holds up the basket. Gogo peers inside and frowns. She touches her gourd.

GOGO (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Who made the badges, Zinzi?
 They are not of human hands.

Zinzi pulls the basket away from Gogo.

ZINZI
 These badges will pay our rent.

Zinzi defiantly tips the badges onto the counter.

Mrs Valentine turns at the clatter of the badges, and flabbergasted, shouts into her cell phone -

MRS VALENTINE
 Call me back!

She runs greedy hands through the badges.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)
 Overnight!

ZINZI
 So can we pay the rent with a
 hundred badges every week?

Mrs Valentine nods in agreement. Zinzi twists a braid nervously.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
 Mrs Valentine, say we do two
 hundred badges... Would you give us
 money for food?

MRS VALENTINE
 Bring them next Monday.

Zinzi darts a triumphant look in Gogo's direction. Gogo's face creases in concern.

19 EXT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS

19

As the children trail after Zinzi out of the shop, Leila points at a figure just a bit taller than her entering the shop. It is the Boondogle -decked out in a white suit, scarf, straw hat and dark glasses.

ZINZI
(defensive)
We're fine, Gogo.

Zinzi holds up the basket. Gogo peers inside and frowns. She touches her gourd.

GOGO (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Who made the badges, Zinzi?
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Bring them next Monday.

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19

EXT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS

19

As the children trail after Zinzi out of the shop, Leila points at a figure just a bit taller than her entering the shop. It is the Boondogle -decked out in a white suit, scarf, straw hat and dark glasses.

VUYO
It's rude to stare!

Sam and Leila scamper off giggling to join Zinzi, who's ahead and hasn't noticed the Boondogle.

20 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS

20

The Boondogle swaggers right up to Mrs Valentine, his hat hung low, covering most of his face.

BOONDOGLE
(stagey foreign accent)
You must be Madame Valentine -
This shop of yours is quite divine!

He kisses her hand and she giggles. He picks up one of the new badges.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Whoever made these is a master -
Ask for more, he must work faster!
Abroad I'd sell a load of these,
Could I place an order please?

Mrs Valentine flutters her mascara-laden eyelashes.

MRS VALENTINE
No trouble at all! My little
beaders are busy as we speak.

The Boondogle gives a satisfied nod. He swaggers out the bead curtain, grinning.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
(gloats to himself)
Of Zinzi's fears I came alive,
I need her fear to live and thrive.
Zinzi now will need me more
Than she did the time before.

Mrs Valentine turns to the other women.

MRS VALENTINE
What a charming, well-educated man!
He's a bit short, but never mind.
He seems clever - and rich. I'm set
to make a fortune!

21 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - AFTERNOON

21

Vuyo crosses out SUNDAY 11th JANUARY on Mrs Valentine's calendar. The previous Monday to Saturday are already crossed through.

MONDAY 12th and MONDAY 19th are circled as rent days and there's a star next to TUESDAY 20th - labelled BACK 2 SCHOOL.

Zinzi is busy beading badges at the table.

VUYO

How many have we got so far?

ZINZI

(sighs)

Not even half enough.

Suddenly Zinzi's two girlfriends appear at the window.

GIRL 1

We're all going over to Chantal's house. Won't you come?

Zinzi puts her head in her hands.

ZINZI

No, I really don't feel like it.

GIRL 2

We've got the new 'NOW' CD - you loved the first track! Come, it'll be fun.

ZINZI

Maybe some other time.

The girls shrug and drop out of sight.

Vuyo raises his eyebrows questioningly at Zinzi.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I promised Leila to take her to the park. My friends would never understand.

22

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

22

Alone on the seesaw, Zinzi beads diligently. Her pair of sewing scissors is balanced on her knee, and her little rucksack is on the ground. She looks up longingly at Leila and Sam playing on the jungle gym - Sam showing Leila how to do somersaults.

- ZINZI'S POV: Vuyo is balanced on the lowest rung of the jungle gym. Sam climbs up to the top. Leila follows.

SAM

I'm the king of the castle!

LEILA

I'm the queen!

SAM & LEILA
You're the dirty rascal, Vuyo!

Suddenly Vuyo clambers down and comes running towards the seesaw.

Vuyo yanks down the side opposite Zinzi, climbing on.
Zinzi's side bounces up and down again. She grabs onto the bead tin -

ZINZI
Careful!

But Vuyo has started scribbling in his exercise book. He holds it up for Zinzi to see: a sketch of the Boondogle.

Zinzi's mouth falls open in shock.

ZINZI
Where's he?!

The Boondogle coughs indignantly. He has struck a pose in the middle of the sandpit, flexing his biceps. Zinzi gives a polite little wave. Vuyo leans towards Zinzi. They speak in whispers.

VUYO
You see him too?

ZINZI
(nods)
Promise you won't tell the others?

VUYO
Promise.

ZINZI
There's something a bit creepy
about him...I don't want them
mixed up in all this.

Vuyo stares at Zinzi with big eyes. In the background, Sam and Leila dash from jungle gym to merry-go-round.

ZINZI
He's a... Boondogle. He did the
badges.

Vuyo nods, putting two and two together.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
He said he'd come again to
help...

VUYO

Great!

(frowns)

But... why are you beading then?

ZINZI

I just don't know whether I can
trust him. Will he really come
back... and in time?

The Boondogle suddenly appears, squatting on the seesaw's centre. He weighs down Vuyo's side with his tail - so the seesaw hangs in the balance. He snarls at Zinzi.

BOONDOGLE

You have no faith in me my dear,
It's my game, so listen here:
I visit when I want to play -
The time is not for you to say.

ZINZI

Sor-

But chortling, the Boondogle leaps off - so Zinzi's side of the seesaw lands with a THUD that sends beads flying.

On the merry-go-round - the Boondogle stands right behind Leila. Sam and Leila, eyes squeezed closed, notice nothing - blissfully absorbed in spinning. Sam's Superman cape flies out behind him.

Zinzi rushes - terrified - towards the roundabout. The Boondogle's biceps swell up visibly and he flashes her a triumphant smile and hops off. He hoists himself up onto the jungle gym.

ZINZI

(voice quavering)

Come - we're going home. Now!

LEILA

I never went on the seeee-saw!

Vuyo offers the miserable Leila a piggy-back.

SAM

Ja! It's not fair! You and Vuyo
were hogging it the whole time!

Zinzi drags the protesting Sam off the merry-go-round, glancing nervously over her shoulder for the Boondogle.

- ON THE JUNGLE GYM

The Boondogle watches from on high as the cross and silent foursome trudge up the hill towards home.

He admires his newly muscular biceps.

BOONDOGLE

It's vital Zinzi does not know
That it's her fear that makes me grow.
Each time I give her cause for fright
I get more strength, increase my might!

23 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - EVENING

23

The children sit round the candle-lit table, finishing off plates of plain rice. Leila is as usual sharing with Teddy.

Zinzi is reading her book. Vuyo is doodling in his exercise book.

Sam scrapes his plate clean, and pulls down Zinzi's book to look at her with pleading puppy eyes.

SAM

I'm still hungry...

Zinzi ignores him.

Sam goes to the cupboard - bare but for the can of pears from Mr Solomon.

SAM (CONT'D)

Can't I have the pears?

Zinzi sighs and puts down her book.

ZINZI

Sorry, no.

Sam grabs the can, but Zinzi gets to the can opener before him. Sam and Zinzi stand at loggerheads on either side of the table.

SAM

What's your problem, Zinzi?
Tomorrow we'll get food money.

VUYO

Only if we make two hundred badges,
Sam.

ZINZI

I've only made 70 all week - and
it's not like I can work any
faster.

SAM

I never get enough to eat around
here!

Sam slams the can on the table and stamps off to bed, where he turns up the radio and takes out his Superman comic.

ZINZI
(shouts over racket)
If I don't get these badges done,
we'll soon have nothing at all to
eat.

Leila looks from Zinzi to Sam and bursts into noisy tears. Zinzi hugs Leila to her, touching her mother's beads around her neck.

24 EXT. OUTSIDE WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

24

Nobody sees the Boondogle's face squashed up against the window. He strokes his hairy neck and eyes Zinzi's mother's beads.

BOONDOGLE
Those shining jewels would look most fine
Around this noble neck of mine!

25 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

25

The wind howls; a siren wails. The clock reads after 2 a.m. Sam and Leila are asleep.

Vuyo lies surreptitiously awake - clasping his exercise book and pen.

Zinzi counts the badges...

ZINZI
71...72...73.

VUYO
Not enough for the rent, let
alone for the food money.

ZINZI
Are you ready if he does come?

Zinzi slams her clenched fists on the table, wailing.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
What am I thinking? He's not
going to co-ome! I know he's not -

With a flash of light, the Boondogle appears before her.

BOONDOGLE
You dare to doubt my promise then?
You dare to question where and when?

Zinzi backs away, clearly frightened.

The Boondogle grins and shoots up to the size of Sam.

ZINZI

I'm sorry. I was so scared - and
two hundred is such a lot...

But the Boondogle isn't listening. He leans over the sleeping Leila.

Vuyo watches on in silent dismay.

BOONDOGLE

Oh pretty babe, so fast asleep -
I wish that you were mine to keep...

Humming under his breath, the Boondogle tucks a wayward curl behind Leila's ear.

ZINZI

(hisses)
I told you to keep away from my
sister!

Zinzi rushes to the side of the bed in terror.

The Boondogle grows a second time, to Vuyo's height. He winks at Zinzi.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Just leave. I don't need your
help.

BOONDOGLE

Zinzi, that's just selfish pride -
You need me as your help and guide...
You ought to think more of the others
Little Leila and her brothers!

Zinzi stares at him aghast. Slowly she nods her agreement.

ZINZI

You're right. I do need you.

The Boondogle smiles smugly. He flaps his wings and swings his tail, preparing to work his magic.

As the Boondogle chants, the loose beads sparkle and move.

Vuyo scribbles the spell secretly in his exercise book.

BOONDOGLE

Fear my ventricular lustrations
Hear these auricular cantations
Take our orbicular creations
Make three particular collations!

On 'collations' two hundred badges appear with a CLICK.

Zinzi smiles thankfully.

ZINZI
You're incredible!

Zinzi proudly places the can of pears before the Boondogle.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
I kept it for you!

She reaches for the can opener but he snatches the can, punctures and rips off the lid with a talon. He slurps the pears down in one gulp.

He smacks his lips and drops the can on the floor. Juice dribbles down his chin. He leans forward and wipes his chin on Zinzi's braids. She looks at him in disgust.

BOONDOGLE
Sweet! But only half my price -
Those beads of yours are rather nice!

The Boondogle touches Zinzi's mother's necklace. Zinzi clasps it and backs away.

ZINZI
You can't! This was my mother's!

The Boondogle leans forward to grab the necklace, tugging it to emphasise each point.

BOONDOGLE
I would advise you to stay calm,
Or - I'll unleash my backwards charm!

He points at the badges and slowly begins his magical routine, chanting backwards, watching Zinzi out the corner of his eye...

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Snoita-lloc raluc-itrap eerht ekam...

The badges start to shake and stretch, a few beads leaping into the air like popcorn.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Snoita-erc raluc-ibro ruo ekat...

The Boondogle starts to speak faster, enjoying Zinzi's mounting terror.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
Snoita-tnac-

Zinzi looks across at Leila sleeping innocently.

ZINZI

Okay! Okay! You win.

With a massive grin, the Boondogle grows a third time, swelling up to stand head to head with Zinzi. He snatches the necklace from Zinzi's neck and pulls it over his own head.

The Boondogle turns around, modelling the necklace, and chortles with delight as he catches sight of Vuyo clutching his exercise book in bed. The Boondogle struts across and flips Vuyo's exercise book to a fresh page.

BOONDOGLE

Well I never, here's the artist!
Vuyo, you are quite the smartest.
It would be my greatest pleasure
To let you draw me at your leisure.

Vuyo pushes his glasses up his sweaty nose, and shakily takes up his pencil.

The Boondogle turns to the mirror and preens.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Bedecking all of Afric's kings
Are beaded crowns and beaded rings.
I have the jewels, I have the face,
I have the height, I have the grace!

He turns to Vuyo and strikes up a pose, talons on his hips. He smiles, showing off a set of pale yellow teeth.

ZINZI

No, it's late. Vuyo needs to
sleep.

BOONDOGLE

No portrait now? That is a shame!
Such splendour surely begs a frame.

VUYO

Maybe next time, Mr Boondogle...?

ZINZI

Yes, next time!

The Boondogle cocks his head to one side and picks a piece of pear from between his teeth with the tip of a talon. He demonstrates by holding up one, two and three talons:

BOONDOGLE

I've helped you once; I've helped you twice;
I must return to help you thrice.
But after that my power's spent,
You're on your own to pay your rent.

ZINZI

Only once more!

The Boondogle shrugs and lifts his dolphin tail to let rip a loud fart, before vanishing in a flash. Vuyo holds his nose.

VUYO

He's so gross!

ZINZI

(wails)

He took Mama's necklace. How could he?

VUYO

Don't worry, Zinzi, we won't need him anymore. I have the spell!

He waves his exercise book with the scribbled spell.

VUYO (CONT'D)

We'll make enough for next week and the week after...

Sam and Leila wake to stare at Vuyo struggling to read:

VUYO (CONT'D)

Fear my ventri...cular lustra...tions
Hear these auri...cular canta...tions.

Zinzi and Vuyo look hopefully at the pile of badges, but there's no movement.

Vuyo carries on, now flapping his arms, and shaking his bum for want of a tail - clumsily knocking into the table in his enthusiasm.

Sam and Leila giggle and mimic Vuyo, Leila jiggling her Teddy, and Sam getting into the moves. Zinzi watches anxiously, twisting her braid.

VUYO

Take our orbi...cular crea...tions
Make three parti...cular colla...tions.

Vuyo looks glumly at the beads, which don't budge an inch.

VUYO (CONT'D)

It didn't work.

A SCREAM as Leila, still jiggling about, cuts her foot on the jagged can lying on the floor. A little blood trickles down her foot. Sam picks up the can, glaring at Zinzi.

SAM

Empty! Who ate them?

VUYO

The Boon-

Zinzi interrupts him, with a 'be quiet' glare.

ZINZI

I did. I ate the pears.

LEILA

There's blood! Phone Mama! I want her!

Zinzi marches across to look at Leila's cut.

SAM

Zinzi, you're so selfish!

ZINZI

And you're a spoiled brat. Go to bed!

Sam glares at Zinzi and stamps off furiously.

Zinzi fills a basin with water. She turns to Leila.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Get over here and wash your foot.

Zinzi slams the basin down and storms into the bathroom.

Clutching Teddy, Leila sits on the floor, her foot in the basin. Vuyo dries her foot and sticks a plaster on the cut. Leila holds up Teddy's arm: some stuffing is coming out of the armpit.

LEILA

Teddy's sore. He needs a plas-ta too!

VUYO

No Leila, see we've only got a couple left.

Leila lies on the floor, crying furiously. She finally stops on spotting something colourful beneath the table: it is the muddled badge with the Boondogle icon. She seizes the badge and pins it to close the hole in Teddy's armpit. She whispers in Teddy's ear.

LEILA

When Mama comes back, she'll give you a pwop-a plas-ta.

26

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

Zinzi brushes her teeth furiously. She stares at her reflection in the tarnished mirror. Her eyes are puffy from exhaustion, her braids tangled and her shirt crumpled. Alongside her reflection appears that of the Boondogle wearing her mother's beads.

Zinzi turns but he is not there. When she looks in the mirror, the Boondogle's reflection again leers at her. But when she turns once more, he's no longer there. She is quite alone.

27

INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - MORNING

27

The Boondogle, now Zinzi's height, sweeps through the bead curtain into the shop - once more decked out in white suit, scarf, hat and dark glasses. Zinzi's necklace swings around his neck. He carries a long-stalked King Protea.

He makes an admiring tour of the shelves - trying on a conical crown and admiring himself in a mirror.

All a-fluster, Mrs Valentine turns to the Beading Women at the back.

MRS VALENTINE

Our very first customer for the day! Doesn't he seem taller?

(giggles)

He must be growing on me! But oh dear, he'll be wanting his order. I should never have trusted those kids! Why aren't they here yet?

The Boondogle presents himself at the counter, his hat slung low as usual, bows with a flourish and hands the protea to Mrs Valentine.

BOONDOGLE

Madame Valentine so sweet -
Are my badges all complete?

MRS VALENTINE

We'll have two hundred coming in shortly, Sir...

BOONDOGLE

Two hundred won't go far enough
These badges really are great stuff.
Demand is high, they're all the rage,
I'll sell thousands at this stage!

Mrs Valentine gulps - before recovering her composure.

MRS VALENTINE

Well, we'll work day and night for
our favourite customer, won't we
Gogo?

Gogo touches her gourd and says nothing. The Boondogle leans
towards Mrs Valentine.

BOONDOGLE

While your beads are fine and rare,
A jewel like you is past compare.

MRS VALENTINE

(giggles)

Thank you. Here's a little token
from Valentine's Bead Curios.

She takes a deep breath and gives him a Zulu beaded love
letter (a patterned beaded square) from a bowl on the
counter. He holds it up and interprets the red and white
triangular design.

BOONDOGLE

White's a heart as pure as you,
Red's for love that's strong and true...
Soon we shall walk side by side
When I claim you to be my bride.

He bows so deeply that he scrapes the ground, before striding
out, flicking his scarf over his shoulder.

Mrs Valentine clutches the counter to steady herself, fanning
her flushed face. She scratches in her bag for a mirror, and
carefully paints her lips a glossy cerise.

Zinzi and Vuyo push through the bead curtain, lugging two
baskets of badges. Leila tries to help. Mrs Valentine
closes her bag with a snap.

MRS VALENTINE

You're late! You could have lost me
my best customer. Are they ready?

Zinzi and Vuyo tip the badges onto the counter. Sam bursts
in, humming Superman's signature tune, with one arm
extended in imitation of Superman's flight. He stops just
short of the counter.

SAM

Two hundred badges!

LEILA

Teddy can count to two hun-dwed!

MRS VALENTINE

My, my! Haven't you been busy bees?

Sighing with relief, Mrs Valentine runs her hands through the badges. Zinzi pipes up nervously, twirling a braid -

ZINZI

Mrs Valentine... we could make even more for next time.

Mrs Valentine tries to hide the smile creeping across her lips.

MRS VALENTINE

Well, how many exactly? I've got an extremely large order.

ZINZI

Ten thousand badges. By next Monday.

Sam gasps, rolling his eyes in dismay. But Vuyo smiles knowingly.

MRS VALENTINE

Extraordinary!

(turns to Gogo)

Exactly who does this girl think she is? I'd need a factory of kids to make that many.

Gogo shakes her head in worry. The beading ladies tut-tut.

VUYO

But what if we actually did do the ten thousand?

ZINZI

Then would you let us have the room - forever?

Mrs Valentine laughs condescendingly.

MRS VALENTINE

Have it your own way. But if you don't make ten thousand, you will get out of that room and never come back.

(smiles smugly)

And if somehow you do the impossible, I'll be rich! It's what I call a win-win situation. I win or I win!

ZINZI

We want it in writing.

Vuyo rips a page out of his exercise book.

Mrs Valentine laughs, but Zinzi coolly stares back, refusing to budge. With a long-suffering sigh Mrs Valentine writes, Vuyo reading aloud -

VUYO

I will give Zinzi the room if she makes ten thousand badges by Monday 19 January...

ZINZI

(carrying on reading)
If not, the children will leave the room the same day.

Smirking, Mrs Valentine slaps down the paper.

MRS VALENTINE

No one can say I cheated you motherless children. We have a deal.

Vuyo places the page back in his exercise book.

- BEHIND THE BEAD CURTAIN

The Boondogle is lurking. He frowns, perturbed.

BOONDOGLE

I didn't think she'd be so smart
To strike a deal with Madame 'Heart'!

- AT THE COUNTER

MRS VALENTINE

Gogo, will you take Zinzi to fetch more thread?

Mrs Valentine turns to Vuyo and Sam.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

You two come and fetch beads from the van.

- BEHIND THE BEAD CURTAIN

The Boondogle steps away from the entrance and presses himself against the wall outside the shop as the boys leave with Mrs Valentine.

- BOONDOGLE'S POV: The Boondogle returns to his position to watch Zinzi follow Gogo to the back of the shop.

BOONDOGLE

Her third wish is my command...
Ten thousand badges she'll demand!

The Boondogle claps his talons to his head in despair.

Sighing with relief, Mrs Valentine runs her hands through the badges. Zinzi pipes up nervously, twirling a braid -

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Extraordinary!

(turns to Gogo)

Exactly who does this girl think she is? I'd need a factory of kids to make that many.

Gogo shakes her head in worry. The beading ladies tut-tut.

VUYO

But what if we actually did do the ten thousand?

ZINZI

Then would you let us have the room - forever?

Mrs Valentine laughs condescendingly.

MRS VALENTINE

Have it your own way. But if you don't make ten thousand, you will get out of that room and never come back.

(smiles smugly)

And if somehow you do the impossible, I'll be rich! It's what I call a win-win situation. I win or I win!

ZINZI

We want it in writing.

Vuyo rips a page out of his exercise book.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Then she'll secure her home for ever
And I'll be doomed... Unless I'm clever.

The Boondogle watches Leila go to the counter.

- BOONDOGLE'S POV: Leila scratches the two-headed dog behind its ears, which twitch appreciatively. Leila scrunches up her face - this time managing to close just one eye in a strained wink.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Zinzi needs new cause for fright
If I'm to stay, and build my might.

The Boondogle saunters over to Leila, smiling conspiratorially. He takes a large key on a red heart beaded key ring from the counter. Leila giggles as he flips the key in the air. He pockets it and leaves with a cheery wave over his shoulder.

- IN THE STOREROOM AT THE BACK OF THE SHOP

Gogo puts her wrinkled hand on Zinzi's shoulder.

GOGO

Zinzi, you children can't make ten thousand badges alone.

ZINZI

I know what I'm doing, Gogo.

GOGO

Do you, Zinzi?

ZINZI

All I understand is that I've got to keep the family together.

Gogo lifts Zinzi's chin to look straight in her eyes.

GOGO

You are frightened.

Zinzi looks away from Gogo's gaze.

ZINZI

I'm fine.

Gogo places bags of beads in Zinzi's basket.

GOGO

(gently)
Just be careful, Zinzi.

28 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - AFTERNOON

28

Vuyo crosses through SUNDAY 18th JANUARY on Mrs Valentine's calendar. We see that the previous Monday to Saturday are already crossed through. MONDAY 19th is circled as rent day and there's a star next to TUESDAY 20th - labelled BACK 2 SCHOOL.

Zinzi is hemming a pair of grey school trousers.

VUYO

Rent day tomorrow. Your friend
better come tonight. Or we'll be
out on the street.

ZINZI

I'm counting on it...
(forced cheer)
I wonder what delicacy would
please his royal smelliness?

29 INT. SOLOMON'S CORNER STORE - DAY

29

Zinzi chooses a crispy PIE.

LEILA

Is that for supper?

Zinzi shakes her head, counting the few coins in her hand.

Leila pouts before noticing a big glass jar of GUMMY-BEAR SWEETS on the counter. She shows them to Teddy.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Look - lots and lots of teddies.
One, two, fwee, firteen...

Mr Solomon comes through from the back.

MR SOLOMON

How are you doing, little Leila?

LEILA

Um, I'm fine. But Teddy's sad.

Mr Solomon listens, nodding encouragingly.

LEILA (CONT'D)

(takes a big breath)
And you know what, um, Vuyo gwowed
this much.

Leila stretches up to demonstrate Vuyo's growth.

LEILA (CONT'D)
 (to Teddy)
 Mama will be so-o s'pvised when she
 comes back!

Mr Solomon frowns, concerned.

LEILA (CONT'D)
 Zinzi had to make his twou-zers
 long-er. For schoo-ol. And you know
 what, um, Zinzi didn't make any
 badges the whole week!

Zinzi arrives at the counter to hear Leila's last comment -

ZINZI
 Shush Leila!

Zinzi tugs at Leila. Mr Solomon watches them go, before
 turning to the next customer: the Boondogle, disguised in a
 shawl and spotted bonnet, head buried in a Sunday paper.

MR SOLOMON
 I really should help those poor
 kids. Thing is, I've already got
 three children myself...

BOONDOGLE
 Yes, charity begins at home -
 First you have to help your own!

MR SOLOMON
 Mmm, but...

Mr Solomon moves quickly to the door and calls out -

MR SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 Zinzi!

Zinzi returns, and Mr Solomon hands her bread and milk. Zinzi
 gives him a little smile.

ZINZI
 Thank you so much, Mr Solomon.

Mr Solomon gives Leila two gummy bears.

MR SOLOMON
 One for you and one for your teddy.

LEILA
 (speaking for Teddy)
 Fank you Mis-tah!

The disguised Boondogle snorts in disgust as Zinzi and Leila
 go on their way. He speaks from behind the newspaper.

BOONDOGLE

It's not your duty to provide -
Those kids will take you for a ride!

MR SOLOMON

Well, I don't know. They're good
kids. I'll phone my sister in
Johannesburg - she's always full
of good ideas.

30 EXT. SOLOMON'S CORNER STORE - CONTINUOUS

30

The Boondogle huffs out, muttering.

BOONDOGLE

A friend like him could soothe her fears,
Ease her hunger, dry her tears.
Without her fear I'll shrink away;
She must be scared if I'm to stay.

He walks into a phone booth, looking at the phone number on
his shopping bag.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Solomon could spoil my plan,
I'll rid us of this kindly man...

31 INT. PHONE BOOTH / INT. SOLOMON'S CORNER STORE - DAY

31

We cut between the phone booth and the store, where the phone
rings.

MR SOLOMON

Solomon's Corner Store!

BOONDOGLE

(clearing his throat)
This is Doctor Piet de Siet,
Calling you from... Quack Quack Street!
Your sister's taken very ill
In Jo'burg General Hospital.

MR SOLOMON

What?!

BOONDOGLE

You must quickly board a flight -
She might not make it through the night!

MR SOLOMON

I will come right away!

From the phone booth, the Boondogle watches Mr Solomon exit
the shop with a suitcase, stick a sign on the front door,
and lock up.

The Boondogle grins smugly.

BOONDOGGLE
I've sent her helper from the game,
Deceit's my goal - de Siet's my name!

32

EXT. PARK - DAY

32

Zinzi and Vuyo are on the swings. Zinzi is reading her book and scuffing the ground with her sandals. Vuyo is doodling in his exercise book.

- AT THE JUNGLE-GYM

Sam does a somersault, and Leila follows with a wobbly one. An ICE CREAM VAN trundles by with an alluring tune, and Sam leaps off to chase it, his Superman cape flying.

- AT THE SWINGS

ZINZI
Vuyo - please get Sam. He knows we
can't afford ice cream.

Vuyo chases Sam, lagging far behind.

VUYO
Sam! Sam!

Zinzi's two girlfriends walk past, laughing.

GIRLFRIENDS
Hello, Zinzi!

ZINZI
Hi! How are -

But the girls walk on without stopping to talk. Zinzi swallows hard, twirling the chains of the swing around as far as they will go.

LEILA
Look at me, Zinzi! Look at me-ee!

Zinzi claps politely as Leila does a wobbly somersault.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Come play wif me!

Zinzi goes back to her book.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Mama always played wif me!

ZINZI

Do I look like Mama?
(under her breath)
Mama used to play with me too,
you know...

Zinzi - exhausted - collapses her head on her book.

- ON THE JUNGLE GYM

Hanging from the jungle gym, Leila sulks.

LEILA

No-body wants to play wif me-ee!
I'm bored. There's nuffing to do.

Suddenly the Boondogle appears alongside Leila, flashing her a naughty grin. He races off, swinging from bar to bar - Zinzi's mother's necklace dangling. Leila swings after him, but pauses on facing a big gap. The Boondogle swings from the highest bar.

BOONDOGLE

Who's a chicken? Boo, hoo, who?
Don't be frightened, I'll catch you!

- AT THE SWINGS

Zinzi looks up to see the Boondogle catching Leila.

Zinzi dashes over and the Boondogle puts Leila down and hoists himself up to the top of the jungle gym.

ZINZI

(hisses)
Never, ever talk to him again!

LEILA

But he's fun!

Zinzi squeezes her tight.

ZINZI

I'm sorry I didn't play with you.
I've not been much fun.

- ON THE JUNGLE GYM

The Boondogle flexes his biceps - bulging more than ever.

- BOONDOGLE'S POV: He leers down at Zinzi cradling Leila in her arms, and whispers to himself...

BOONDOGLE

Little Leila, precious thing:
The perfect final offering.

33

INT. ZINZI'S HOME - NIGHT

33

The clock reads 3 o'clock. The pie and a bunch of grapes are on a plate. Zinzi paces the dark house, muttering to herself.

ZINZI

What was I thinking? Ten thousand badges!

She looks at the others. Vuyo's body is twisted up in a tangle of sheets and he murmurs to himself as he dreams.

Besides him, Sam is flat on his back, Superman comic on his stomach. He snores softly, an arm flung across Vuyo's chest.

In the other bed, Leila sleeps peacefully, cuddling Teddy.

Zinzi closes her eyes.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Come on Boondogle, pleeease!

She peeps hopefully through half-closed eyes, but there's no Boondogle. She runs to the beads and struggles to thread a needle, before feverishly starting to bead. She jabs her finger with the needle.

All at once the Boondogle appears with a flash, Zinzi's mother's beads glinting about his neck.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Thank goodness!

But the Boondogle has already spotted the pie and grapes, and is licking his baboon lips. Zinzi darts to save the food, but the Boondogle devours the pie in one bite - and the grapes, stalks and all, in another. Gravy oozing down his chin, he gazes at Zinzi quizzically.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Ten thousand - please?

The Boondogle bows with a melodramatic sweep of wings, knocking over a chair. In bed Leila mumbles and turns over.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Please don't wake the children!

The Boondogle chortles, and chants in a stage whisper with more constrained movements. As he chants, the loose beads sparkle and start to move into patterns...

BOONDOGLE

Fear my ventricular lustrations
Hear these auricular cantations

Take our orbicular creations
Make three particular collations!

Ten thousand badges appear with a CLICK - covering the table and flowing onto the floor in heaps, stacked against the furniture. The Boondogle raises his talons in triumph. Zinzi belly flops onto the badges.

ZINZI
You're a genius! Thank you so much!

BOONDOGLE
So I am! And it's my pleasure!
Now it's time to claim my treasure.

ZINZI
(frowns)
Treasure? But you ate the pie and the grapes...

BOONDOGLE
You think that's all you can afford?
(sniggers)
I'll leave today with rich reward!

ZINZI
But, there's no more food! None!

The Boondogle points at Leila sleeping, her face lit by a street lamp.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
You want to eat Leila?!

The Boondogle looks smugly into Zinzi's terrified eyes and shoots up by a head. He looks down at her mockingly.

BOONDOGLE
Shh! Zinzi do not raise your voice,
Kids are not my food of choice.
No, all I ask is a fair trade -
Not much for all the rent I've paid.

ZINZI
Take me instead!

The Boondogle grows a second time.

BOONDOGLE
I want your sister as my prize
Her liveliness, her shining eyes...

ZINZI
No way! Undo the badges rather!

He lopes towards Leila, tail swinging from side to side. Zinzi stumbles through badges to block him, but the Boondogle ploughs past.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Please! I'll do anything, anything at all...

Zinzi cowers in fright as the Boondogle grows a third time. He has to stoop now, to avoid scraping the ceiling.

BOONDOGLE

(to himself)

I've kept her frightened all along,
Yet I've never been this strong!

Zinzi runs to shield Leila. But the Boondogle swings Zinzi aside by her braids and grabs Leila. Leila starts shrieking - waking Vuyo and Sam.

Sam scrambles out of bed to tackle the Boondogle's legs, and Vuyo follows suit. But the Boondogle kicks them off, sending them crashing to the floor - and Vuyo's glasses flying.

Carrying Leila and Teddy under a wing, the Boondogle bulldozes his way through mounds of badges. Zinzi strikes his belly with a broom.

Snarling, the Boondogle rears up and swipes Zinzi with a talon - tearing her shirt and knocking her to the ground.

Leila accidentally drops Teddy - and starts sobbing. She reaches down for it, but the Boondogle's wing pins her tightly to his side.

LEILA

Ted-dy!

Vuyo tries to catch hold of the swinging tip of the Boondogle's tail, but fails. Sam pounces and briefly clings onto the tail before being flicked off with a twitch.

In a blinding flash the Boondogle disappears - taking Leila with him.

Vuyo and Sam stare at the place where they disappeared.

Zinzi roughly wipes away her tears.

ZINZI

What are we waiting for?!

Zinzi, Vuyo and Sam run down the road in the dim light of dawn. Zinzi wears her little rucksack as usual.

Vuyo's exercise book and pen stick out of his pocket. Sam's Superman cape flies behind him. They run towards the lights of Solomon's Corner Store.

35 EXT. SOLOMON'S CORNER STORE - CONTINUOUS 35

The children rush up to the door of the store - to find a sign: SHOP CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE - FAMILY EMERGENCY.

The children look around at each other, at a complete loss. The CALL TO PRAYER drifts from a mosque.

The children run on down the road, the grey ocean spread out below them. The roofs of the houses slope down towards the harbour in staggered lines, silhouetted against the dawn light.

36 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - DAWN 36

The clock reads ten minutes to five. The shop is silent, except for the stealthy padding of feet.

The Boondogle walks away from the shelves, and with a last look over his shoulder, he exits the shop, the bead curtain tinkling as he goes through.

BOONDOGLE

With Leila hidden out of sight,
Zinzi has true cause for fright.
If in this plan I can succeed
My life on earth is guaranteed.

37 EXT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS 37

The Boondogle slinks out of the shop, and careful not to be seen, locks the door using the stolen key on its red heart beaded key ring.

Glancing up, the Boondogle sees the children pounding towards the shop. He yanks an old cardboard box out of a bin and rips off the lid.

Dipping his talon into a discarded pot of paint, he writes CLOSED TODAY and props it up against the door to Valentine's Bead Curios.

He surreptitiously slips behind a queue of TOURISTS waiting at a coach stop across the road.

The children rush up panting to the shop entrance.

Vuyo points to the Boondogle's CLOSED TODAY sign.

SAM

It's not fair! Everything's going wrong!

ZINZI

It's all my fault - I've gone and sold Leila for some badges.

VUYO

Come guys, we've got to keep going.

- BEHIND THE TOURISTS

The Boondogle smiles smugly to himself, but his grin fades as Zinzi takes her rucksack from her back.

ZINZI

No, we'll wait here for Gogo.

The Boondogle scratches his head for an idea and then waves wildly to the children across the road, flashing a wide smile of greeting.

The children charge across the road to confront him.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Where have you put Leila?

The Boondogle looks around in exaggerated surprise. He speaks in a honeyed voice of sympathy.

BOONDOGLE

You're only three? One short to play...
So I will be your fourth today!

VUYO

Where have you taken Leila?

The Boondogle ignores Vuyo, and, pulling a pack of playing cards from his sleeve, he backs away, shuffling as he speaks.

BOONDOGLE

A game of cards will do the trick!
Go on, you may take your pick:
Hearts or Happy Families?
Racing Demons if you please?

SAM

Just tell us! Where is Leila?

The Boondogle smugly spreads the pack of cards out like a fan. The children look at each other in frustration.

BOONDOGLE

Klawerjas, Bridge or Black Jack?
There's no game I lack the knack at!
Rummy? Patience? Snap or Poker?
King and Queen, Jack and Joker!

The Boondogle brandishes a Joker - and points to himself - striking a Joker pose.

SAM

But it's no joke!

VUYO

We've run out of patience!

ZINZI

We don't want to play.

BOONDOGLE

But it's my game! I deal the pack!
You want to get your sister back?

ZINZI

(desperate)
Of course we do! Please...

The Boondogle grins wickedly. But his grin fades on spotting Gogo approaching the shop. He turns to the children.

BOONDOGLE

You don't like cards? Let's hide and seek...
Her hiding place is quite unique!

Over the children's heads, the Boondogle watches Gogo arriving at the shop door where she tears up the CLOSED TODAY sign, shaking her head in annoyance.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

(urgently)
You kids are on, so close your eyes:
Count to ten, then seek your prize!

Zinzi gives the boys a nod, and they all close their eyes.

SAM

One crocodile, two crocodile...

The Boondogle watches until Gogo goes inside.

An open-topped tourist bus draws up to collect the tourists, who follow a TOUR LEADER with a flag and a megaphone.

TOUR LEADER

All aboard for Table Mountain!

SAM
Five crocodile, six crocodile...

The Boondogle surreptitiously snatches a travelling bag from a large MALE TOURIST.

SAM (CONT'D)
(quickly)
...Nine crocodile, ten crocodile.

The children open their eyes. They look around, flummoxed.

ZINZI
He's messing with us.

BOONDOGLE (O.C.)
Yooo-hooo!

VUYO
Look!

As the bus revs to leave, we see the Boondogle on top, seated apart from the band of tourists - who sit gazing up at their tour leader, absorbed in her prattle. The Boondogle wears full safari regalia, topped with a khaki floppy hat. Strings of cameras festoon his neck.

Sam jumps on the back step, followed by Zinzi. They pull Vuyo up after them - just as the bus pulls off.

- ON THE UPPER DECK

The children sneak quietly past the tourists, and surround the Boondogle, who leans on the rail nonchalantly.

SAM
Is this the way to Leila?

The Boondogle shrugs, pointing up to the crags of Table Mountain and out across Table Bay where Robben Island can be seen in the distance, before spreading his talons in mock helplessness.

BOONDOGLE
She could be high. She could be low.
She could be anywhere you know...

The children huddle together in a pow-wow, whispering.

VUYO
High... that's why he's going to
Table Mountain.

ZINZI
But maybe that's what he wants us
to think. He also said low.

That would be the sea. We'll have
to split up.

She is already making her way down the steps at the back.

Vuyo and Sam exchange a worried glance. They lean over the railing on the one side of the deck, and Vuyo calls to Zinzi jogging along below the bus.

VUYO

Let's meet back at the shop - by
midday!

ZINZI

Okay! Midday at the shop.

The Boondogle uses the opportunity to sneak off the bus, climbing over the rail on the other side.

38

EXT. HARBOUR - EARLY MORNING

38

The Boondogle watches Zinzi run towards the quay. Table Bay sparkles with early morning sunlight. The harbour is alive with FISHERMEN scrubbing their vessels, moored to the quay. GULLS wheel and scream overhead. Two YOUNG DOLPHINS play flirtatiously near the breakwater.

Zinzi steps gingerly into a little rubber dinghy alongside a bigger fishing boat. The dinghy wobbles precariously with her weight. She sits down flat on the bottom of the boat and closes her eyes in terror.

She does not see the Boondogle peering down from the deck of the fishing boat or hear him muttering in anguish.

BOONDOGLE

If Zinzi dies, I cannot stay
Without her fear, I'll fade away.
I've got to keep her safe and sound
Come what may, she can't be drowned!

Zinzi braces herself, pulls up the anchor and reaches for the oars.

BOONDOGLE

Zinzi, wait! Lay down your oars!
It's not safe to leave these shores.

ZINZI

Boondogle! You gave me a fright! Is
Leila here?

BOONDOGLE

You think she's low, I think she's high
You think ocean, I think sky!

Zinzi looks up to Table Mountain and then across the sparkling water.

ZINZI

Give me one good reason why I
should trust you.

The Boondogle, taken aback, scratches his head thoughtfully. Zinzi rolls her eyes, grabs the oars and pulls out. The Boondogle stamps his foot in rage.

Zinzi struggles to master the oars but makes clumsy headway into the bay, tensing up when the boat rocks in the swell.

The boat starts to move around in an untidy circle as she struggles to balance her pulls. In frustration, she stops rowing and sinks into herself in despair.

ZINZI

I'll never find my sister at this
rate.

She breaks down in racking sobs.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I'm so frightened for her...

A soft moan rises up from the dolphins. Zinzi looks up to see the pair of dolphins swimming around the boat.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Oh, how I wish I could move as
beautifully as you.

One of the dolphins swims alongside her and arches his back as if to offer her a ride. Zinzi stares at him in amazement.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Could I?!

The dolphins click their encouragement and make urging motions with their heads. Zinzi grips the edge of the boat, knuckles tight.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I need to find if the Boondogle's
hidden Leila anywhere around
Table Bay.

All at once, the dolphins leap back as the Boondogle shoots up from the choppy water - swishing his tail.

BOONDOGLE

The ocean's dark and very deep,
Do you count your life so cheap?

ZINZI

It's not my life I'm worried
about right now.

She looks down at the heaving water with a shiver. The dolphin approaches the side of the boat again and arches his back in invitation. Zinzi gives the Boondogle a steely look.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

And Leila's life is very dear to
me.

She carefully mounts the dolphin and clutches his dorsal fin. Within seconds the two dolphins speed away, gliding across the water.

The Boondogle tries to follow, his tail thrashing chaotically but is soon left behind. He swims back to the quay and hauls himself onto the side where he shakes the water from his fur and feathers, Zinzi's mother's beads swinging about his neck.

He looks anxiously back and forth between the ocean and the mountain, and then, with a last look across the water, he clumsily takes off on his wings towards the cable station.

Zinzi loosens her grip on the dolphin's fin, running hands over his skin. GULLS and CORMORANTS swoop. Light dances on the swells.

Zinzi looks across the bay to Robben Island.

ZINZI

Robben Island! But of course.
He's keeping her prisoner
there...

The dolphins swerve in the direction of the island.

39 EXT. CABLE STATION - MORNING

39

Sam and Vuyo sneak off the bus at the cable station. Vuyo gazes in awe at the crags of Table Mountain.

Sam stares longingly at the cable car gliding up.

SAM

Let's ride up! It'll be quick.

He does a Superman flying impression, forefinger pointed at the mountaintop.

Vuyo reads the prices outside the ticket booth: sixty for children. He shakes his head in dismay.

VUYO

Sorry, Sam. We'll have to walk.

Sam sighs and follows Vuyo towards the steep footpath.

40 EXT. FOOTPATH - MORNING

40

Vuyo and Sam make steady progress up the path. Sam bounds ahead, indicating the surest footholds.

The boys pass a *dassie* sunning itself, lizards scuttle out of the cracks of rocks, glinting in the sunlight. They hear a cackle, and look up to see the Boondogle, dangling below the cable car ascending above. Sam cups his hands and shouts -

SAM

Stinking kidnapper! Where's
Leila?

The Boondogle ignores Sam gesticulating furiously below, and chortles to himself.

BOONDOGGLE

They missed the path at Platteklip,
The rocks are wet, they're bound to slip:
Twist an ankle, snap an arm,
Crack a knee, come to harm!

Sam lobbs a stone at the Boondogle, who stretches out his free arm to catch it, and waves it triumphantly.

Sam glares up at the Boondogle, who becomes smaller and smaller as the cable car slides towards the mountaintop.

VUYO

He must have Leila up there!

The boys carry on up the mountain, with fresh zeal.

- UP ABOVE

Meanwhile, the Boondogle has left the cable car and is flapping his way out to sea.

41 EXT. ROBBEN ISLAND SHORE - MORNING

41

- BOONDOGGLE'S POV: From the Boondogle's bird's eye view, we see the pancake shape of Robben Island against the blue ocean. The dolphins, with Zinzi, are nearing its coastline.

- DOWN BELOW

Zinzi clambers onto the pier of the little harbour.

ZINZI
 (shouts)
 Thank you! I'll be quick.

Zinzi runs towards the sombre prison buildings.

42 INT. PRISON - MORNING

42

Zinzi runs up and down a maze of echoing corridors, looking into each empty cell, calling all the while.

ZINZI
 Leila, Leila!

She pauses outside Mandela's cell, and sinks down on the cement floor.

ZINZI
 I was so sure she was here.
 Where else in this huge ocean
 could he have put her?!

She looks up at the image of Mandela on the wall, takes a deep breath and runs back the way she came.

43 EXT. ROBBEN ISLAND SHORE - MORNING

43

The dolphins hover in shallow water amongst vast schools of shimmering fish. Suddenly, a slimy old fishing net envelopes them. The world goes haywire as they tumble upside down. The dolphins thrash, becoming more entangled. Dozens of fish also caught in the net flap frenziedly.

BOONDOGLE
 The net is cast, my fishy friends,
 This is where your journey ends!

The Boondogle crows from the quay.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
 For me to stay on earth alive
 Zinzi - and her fear - must thrive.
 On this barren isle she'll stay
 Her sister, Leila, far away.

Zinzi comes running down to the shore in time to hear the Boondogle shout at the dolphins -

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)
 You'll die here in this watery grave...
 (gestures at Zinzi)
 To save her from the ocean wave!

Zinzi is horrified to see the dolphins thrashing about in the net below - getting pulled out to sea by the backwash.

ZINZI

How could you!

Zinzi wades out into the breakers. The waves rise up menacingly and she backs onto the sand and collapses, head in hands.

BOONDOGLE

Wise girl. You're safer on the beach.
Forget your friends - they're out of reach.
But now, I've other fish to fry,
So, fare thee well, adieu, goodbye!

With that, he takes off towards the mountain.

Zinzi looks at the dolphins, who are thrashing desperately. She runs into the waves. The surf crashes in her ears.

She suddenly steps into a dip in the seabed and is up to her neck in water. She gasps and struggles back to the shallows, coughing and spluttering, in tears.

The dolphins moan. Zinzi looks up, grabs her beading scissors from her rucksack, takes a deep breath and dives into the waves, swimming towards them. The dolphins watch her encouragingly.

Using her scissors, she hacks away at the netting.

Just as she cuts the last piece loose, a huge wave crashes over Zinzi, sweeping her up, and tossing her violently about. It looks like she's sinking...

44 EXT. OUT TO SEA - CONTINUOUS

44

The dolphins come crashing through the surface with Zinzi. They swim out beyond the waves and are soon surrounded by a school of dolphins who gaze curiously at Zinzi's limp body lying motionless on her escort's back.

45 EXT. FOOTPATH - LATE MORNING

45

From a rock ledge on the opposite side of a ravine, a troop of baboons watch the boys ascend.

Sam leaps down from a rock, landing catlike on the ground. Vuyo slides down on his bottom, ripping the pocket on his shorts. Sam pulls Vuyo to his feet. Both are puffing and panting.

SAM

The mountain's huge. It could
take ages to find Leila.

VUYO
Zinzi's going to worry.

SAM
(glances at sun)
Ja, it'll be midday soon...

VUYO
You're quicker. You go fetch
Zinzi at the shop. I'll carry on
up.

Behind a rock, the Boondogle frowns.

BOONDOGLE
Not the shop, that cannot be!
It's simply a catastrophe!

Vuyo hoists himself onto the rock above. He glances back at Sam in panic.

SAM
Think of Leila. You can do it!

Vuyo keeps going on up.

Sam turns to run down the path, but stops on hearing a high-pitched wailing.

SAM (CONT'D)
Leila?!

Sam looks over the ravine edge and sees that the Boondogle is descending the slope with a baby baboon in his arms.

The troop look down from the opposite side of the ravine, barking furiously. The Boondogle rises to his full height with a ferocious snarl, and they retreat.

SAM (CONT'D)
Evil kidnapper!

Sam scrambles hazardously down the ravine after the Boondogle.

The baboons all peer down, watching.

46 EXT. CAVE - LATE MORNING

46

Sam, still panting, and scratched and scraped from his descent, stands rooted with fear at the dark mouth of a cave at the foot of the gorge.

The Boondogle emerges from the cave mouth. The wails of the baby baboon echo from within. The Boondogle peers theatrically into the darkness.

BOONDOGLE

What a dark and gloomy cave!
Going in? Are you that brave?

Sam edges forward to stare into the dark cobwebbed entrance. He gives a shudder and backs off.

Sam looks up, and sees the baboon troop huddled on the ledge, looking down at him. He ducks down into the cave entrance, but overcome by fear, backs out.

The baby's wails are more desperate now. Sam squares his shoulders and takes a deep breath -

SAM

Super Sam's not scared of the dark.

Sam goes into Superman's flying pose and strides heroically into the cave, stooping as the roof slopes downwards.

The Boondogle leaves, turning to look back at the cave's dark entrance and smiles to himself.

BOONDOGLE

Sam's in the dark and will stay there a while,
Zinzi's safe on the beach of her faraway isle,
Vuyo's the only one left on the field -
If I keep him up there, my future is sealed.

FROM THE LEDGE ABOVE - The baboons watch the Boondogle loping up the other side of the ravine. As soon as he's out of sight the baboons run down the slope towards the cave.

47 EXT. MOUNTAIN - BEFORE MIDDAY

47

Vuyo clammers over a rock, knuckles clenched in fear. He has reached the plateau at the top of the mountain.

A great shadow passes across his face and he looks up to see a majestic EAGLE wheeling high above.

He looks down at the panoramic cityscape, and his knees shaking, turns quickly away from the edge.

Shielding his eyes from the sun, he scans the rocks around him, calling out.

VUYO

Leila! Leila!

But his voice is lost in the wind. Seeing nothing, he ventures across the plateau - the wind buffeting him.

Suddenly he spots the Boondogle on an outcrop of rocks, jutting out over a terrifying drop.

BOONDOGLE

What a dark and gloomy cave!
Going in? Are you that brave?

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VUYO (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Where is she?

The Boondogle ignores him. Vuyo runs to the bottom of the rocks and gazes up its steep rise in terror. He clambers onto the first of the rocks. Halfway up, he freezes up, unable to move.

Vuyo squints into the sunlight at the Boondogle's silhouetted outstretched wings. He is perched on the edge of an eagle's nest on the highest ledge.

BOONDOGLE

I'll eat an egg for I have toiled.

Hmm... Scrambled? Coddled? Fried? Or boiled?

VUYO

(shouts)

Where is Leila?

Vuyo takes a deep breath, and resumes his climb. But he glances down at the sheer drop, which spirals in a dizzy vortex. He freezes up once more, clinging to the rock.

The Boondogle looks from the brown MOTHER EAGLE swirling overhead to the golden FATHER EAGLE dozing on the nest, head on his breast.

BOONDOGLE

While Mum enjoys a right high time,
Daddy dreams, and Eggy's mine!

VUYO

(whispers to himself)

The eagles' eggs... how cruel!

Taking new courage, he scrambles up towards the Boondogle.

BOONDOGLE

Don't count your chicks before they hatch
'Cause one of them I plan to snatch!

The Boondogle licks his lips, drool dribbling down his hairy chin.

Sam leopard-crawls along a gloomy passage - the walls pressing in on him. He breathes fast and panicky as he crawls along the cave floor, following the baby baboon's echoing wails.

Finally, Sam spots the baby baboon's eyes shining in the darkness.

SAM

Come baby, Super Sam won't hurt
you! Let's find your mummy.

Sam carefully scoops him up. The baby clings to his chest
as he crawls towards the light of the cave's entrance.

49

EXT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

49

As Sam emerges, the baboons reach the bottom of the ravine.

The baby baboon leaps into his mother's arms - yelping with
delight.

The most wizened baboon, the BABOON ELDER, steps forward.

BABOON ELDER

What are you doing on the
mountain?

SAM

Looking for my baby sister. The
Boondogle's kidnapped her! Have
you seen her anywhere?

The baboon elder shakes his head gravely.

SAM (CONT'D)

Then I must go...

His brown eyes looking deeply into Sam's, the elder hands a
rock fossil to Sam.

BABOON ELDER

Thank you for your courage. This
fossil has been in our troop for many
a generation. Use it when you need it
most. It will give you the Strength
of the Earth.

SAM

The Strength of the Earth? That's
awesome. Thank you.

Sam pockets the fossil and notices the sun has just about
reached its highest point.

SAM (CONT'D)

The time! It must be nearly noon.
I've got to fetch my sister at
the shop!

50

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - MIDDAY

50

The Boondogle perches above the eagles' nest, plotting dreamily.

BOONDOGGLE

Tap till the eggshell cracks with a crunch,
Benedict for breakfast, omelette for lunch,
Deville eggs for dinner, eggnog for a sweet...
But poached eagle egg's going to be my treat!

Vuyo, balanced on a rock below the Boondogle, grabs the exercise book from his pocket. He flips through and finds the picture of the Boondogle. He draws an egg to fit into the Boondogle's talons. He tears the page out, and folds a paper jet.

Vuyo throws the plane into the sky, where a gust of wind carries it upwards. But the Boondogle sees the jet going up, and takes off on its wings. He catches and crossly crumples it up before returning to loom over the nest.

Oblivious, the mother eagle glides and dives high above. The father eagle slumbers on.

As Vuyo hoists himself onto the ledge, the Boondogle points at the sun, high overhead.

BOONDOGGLE

It seems that you have come for brunch,
But since it's late, let's call it lunch!

VUYO

Forget lunch. Just tell me where
you've put Leila.

BOONDOGGLE

Now why would I cut good fun short?
(waving crumpled paper jet)
I'm not like you - I'm no spoil-sport.

The Boondogle grabs the eggs - to Vuyo's immense horror.

VUYO

Put them down! Please!

The Boondogle laughs with delight and starts to juggle the eggs theatrically, with deliberate near misses.

VUYO (CONT'D)

No! You'll break them!

In desperation, Vuyo starts the Boondogle dance - using made-up words and making crazy exaggerated moves. He glances up repeatedly to see if he has diverted the Boondogle's attention.

VUYO (CONT'D)

Fear me, fear me, venty lusty...

But the Boondogle ignores him.

VUYO (CONT'D)

Hear me, hear me, auri conti...

The Boondogle looks at Vuyo in irritation.

VUYO (CONT'D)

Take me, take me orbi creature...

The Boondogle pauses, as Vuyo screams at the top of his voice, just about break-dancing on the rock.

VUYO (CONT'D)

Make three, make three...

The Boondogle sighs heavily and sets the eggs down on a rock. He claps his talons to his forehead in exasperation. Vuyo smiles triumphantly to himself.

BOONDOGLE

Four-Eyes, that is quite pathetic -
You must grasp the right aesthetic!

The Boondogle hops down onto a boulder, and proudly demonstrates his routine for Vuyo, who obediently imitates his every move.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Fear my ventricular lustrations
Hear these auricular cantations...

The mother eagle at last spots Vuyo and the Boondogle below: a monster and a small, awkward child - dancing together on the rocks.

- MOTHER EAGLE'S POV: When the Boondogle turns his back to wiggle his tail, Vuyo quickly takes the eggs, and, standing on tip toe, reaches up to slide the eggs into the nest beneath the sleeping father eagle.

On turning back, the Boondogle sees that the eggs are gone and rushes at Vuyo.

The mother eagle screeches as she plummets to attack the Boondogle, waking the father eagle who rises to his full height, wings outstretched, beak open menacingly.

Glaring poisonously at Vuyo, the Boondogle flaps off.

Vuyo looks down at the tremendous height he's climbed, and the 360 degree panorama below, and flings his arms up in triumph.

VUYO
I'm king of the castle!

The mother eagle lands besides Vuyo on the ledge.

MOTHER EAGLE
Thank you for your courage.

Vuyo smiles.

VUYO
I'm glad your little ones are
safe.

But he quickly turns grave.

VUYO (CONT'D)
The Boondogle stole my sister
too. We think he has hidden her
up here.

The eagles shake their heads solemnly.

MOTHER EAGLE
We would know if she was on the
mountain.

VUYO
(crestfallen)
Then we were wrong. I must go
down and tell Sam and Zinzi.

With a whirring of wings, the mother eagle scoops an amazed Vuyo from the ledge, and takes off across the plateau.

Dangling from her talons, Vuyo peeps out through half-shut eyes, holding his glasses against the wind.

They do not see the Boondogle lurking on an outcrop, poised for ambush. As the eagle flies by with Vuyo, the Boondogle gives furious chase, bellowing:

BOONDOGLE
So you think you've won this round,
Just you wait for my rebound.
I'm the Joker of the pack,
I'll trump you now! Watch me attack!

The eagle skims over the cliffs - and from Vuyo's point of view it seems they may at any moment crash into the rocks.

But the eagle navigates brilliantly, always rising at the last second. The Boondogle follows just metres behind.

51

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - PAST MIDDAY

51

Vuyo spots a strange three-layered creature below. It is the mother baboon, carrying Sam and her baby down the mountainside. They yell out to each other -

VUYO

Sam?

SAM

Vuyo?

Sam looks up in wonder to see the eagle carrying his brother - the Boondogle flapping crazily after them.

VUYO

I thought you'd be at the shop by now!

Sam places the baby baboon onto his mother's back.

SAM

Sorry, I was delayed!

The mother baboon stops in her tracks, and rears up so that Sam slithers to the ground. On seeing the Boondogle above, the mother baboon barks angrily.

The Boondogle glances down, and distracted, smashes into a silver leaf tree and crashes into a thorny bush below - roaring in pain and fury.

The eagle circles down and releases Vuyo, before landing herself.

Sam hugs Vuyo.

They point at the Boondogle, extracting himself from the thorny bush.

SAM

He's in a prickle.

VUYO

Ja, he's got a thorny problem!

Enraged, the Boondogle stumbles to his feet. Picking thorns out of his tail, he lopes on down the mountain.

BOONDOGLE

How wretched was my mighty fall,
I was distracted, that is all.

Sam hugs the mother baboon and her baby.

SAM

Thank you.

The mother baboon nods before disappearing into the bush, her baby waving a little pink paw. Vuyo turns to the eagle.

VUYO

And thank you for bringing me to Sam.

The eagle swivels her neck, and with her beak plucks out one of her long wing feathers and places it in Vuyo's hand.

MOTHER EAGLE

My wing feathers fly on the wind.
Use this when you need it most.
It will give you the Breath of
the Sky.

VUYO

The Breath of the Sky? Wow! Thank you. It's a beautiful gift.

The eagle spreads her wings and lifts into the sky, making a sweeping U-turn back to the crags above. Shielding their eyes against the sun, the boys watch the eagle until she is a tiny speck against the rock face.

Vuyo notices the sun is past its midpoint.

VUYO (CONT'D)

We're really late for Zinzi.

SAM

It's going to take us ages to get to the shop!

Vuyo looks at the feather in his hand.

VUYO

The eagle said, 'Use it when you need it most.'

SAM

The baboon leader said the same thing.

Sam takes the fossil out of his pocket.

VUYO

But how do we use them?

The boys look sheepishly at each other.

SAM

Abracadabra?

VUYO
Hocus Pocus?

When nothing happens, the boys look at each other, shrug and break into a trot.

52 EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - EARLY AFTERNOON

52

Out on the water, Zinzi slowly stirs - coughing and spluttering up water. She stares blankly at the dolphins surrounding her.

ZINZI
Where am I?
(suddenly remembering)
My sister!

The dolphins click in a chorus of concern, shaking their heads. Zinzi collapses in despair, clinging to the dolphin's neck.

The oldest dolphin swims over with a periwinkle shell, plugged shut with a shiny pebble.

DOLPHIN LEADER
Thank you for your courage.

Zinzi smiles tearfully.

DOLPHIN LEADER (CONT'D)
This shell contains seawater from the deep. Use it when you need it most. It will give you the Lifeblood of the Ocean.

ZINZI
Lifeblood of the Ocean?
That's wonderful. Thank you.

Zinzi stares at the shell and tucks it into her rucksack.

The dolphin carrying her turns towards the shore with his mate. Zinzi waves goodbye to the rest of the school, who flip and dive in a graceful dance of farewell.

53 EXT. OUTSIDE WATERFRONT SHOPS - EARLY AFTERNOON

53

Vuyo and Sam are leaning over the railing of the upper deck of the tourist bus, driving towards the hotel.

They look down to see Zinzi drinking at a water fountain.

VUYO & SAM
Zinzi! Zinzi!

Zinzi looks up and breaks into a smile of relief.

ZINZI

(shouts)

Have you two been on that bus all morning?

Zinzi runs towards the bus stop outside the hotel.

54

EXT. OUTSIDE HOTEL - EARLY AFTERNOON

54

Zinzi, Vuyo and Sam crouch in a tight circle on the grass, where Vuyo's feather and Sam's fossil are lying.

ZINZI

You've both been really brave.

She puts an affectionate arm around each boy.

She takes off her rucksack and removes her periwinkle, which she sets next to the feather and fossil.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

The dolphins gave me this. It's seawater... the Lifeblood of the Ocean. So we've all come back with gifts -

(sighs sadly)

But not with Leila.

Vuyo is the first to notice that the triangle of gifts has taken on a soft glow...

VUYO

Hey!

SAM

They're magic!

ZINZI

It's incredible!

A shadow falls over the children. Standing behind them is Mrs Valentine.

MRS VALENTINE

Ten thousand badges, huh? Nice holiday you lot are having!

Mrs Valentine peers in distaste at the shell, feather and fossil lying on the grass.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

Been scavenging for rubbish, have we Vuyo?

VUYO

Yes, Mrs Valentine, just a pile of junk.

Vuyo quietly returns each gift to its owner.

Mrs Valentine pokes at Sam's cuts and bruises.

MRS VALENTINE

Fighting again, you little skollie!

SAM

(indignant)

Super Sam's not a skollie!

Mrs Valentine isn't listening. She yanks the sopping Zinzi by her rucksack straps.

MRS VALENTINE

Been swimming?

Zinzi stares Mrs Valentine down. Mrs Valentine is furious.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

And what day is today?

ZINZI

Last I checked it was Monday.

MRS VALENTINE

Struggled a bit with the beading did we? I'm getting married soon - to a charming foreign gentleman. We'll be needing the extra room. I'm going to have to let you go.

SAM

But that's not fair! The badges are done!

VUYO

You need to bring your van round.

MRS VALENTINE

Didn't your mother teach you it's wrong to lie?

Zinzi looks Mrs Valentine in the eye.

ZINZI

I don't want you to talk about our mother anymore.

Mrs Valentine's mouth drops open in surprise.

SAM

And anyway, we're telling the truth.

MRS VALENTINE

(sighs)

I'll be there this evening with the van. And if you're wasting my time, I'll turn you out with my bare hands.

The children watch Mrs Valentine stalk off. She stops abruptly and turns back to the children -

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

And where's your little sister?
Left all alone, while you lot jol
all over town!

She flounces off across the road, stopping to shout from the other side.

MRS VALENTINE (CONT'D)

I always said, you're not fit to look after Leila.

Zinzi puts her head in her hands.

ZINZI

She's right, I'm not. I have no idea what to do now.

VUYO

Let's go back to Gogo.

Across the way, Mrs Valentine is gazing at meringue-shaped wedding dresses in a boutique window. Zinzi nods.

ZINZI

Quick - while Valentine is otherwise engaged!

The children slip into the shop.

55 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - CONTINUOUS

55

Zinzi, Vuyo and Sam push through the bead curtain and call out to Gogo, who sits with the circle of beading women.

SAM

We thought the shop was closed!

VUYO

You've got to help us!

ZINZI

He's taken Leila. The Boondogle.

Gogo inhales sharply and beckons to Zinzi.

Zinzi goes over to Gogo, hanging her head.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

I should never have taken his
help.

GOGO

You did what you felt you had to
do.

Vuyo, who has hung back has spotted something on a shelf.

VUYO

Zinzi! Sam!

In a row of dolls is an accurate bead effigy of Leila. The replica is about 40cm and is stiff and lifeless - or almost so: for as the children stare at it, they see that the beads are slowly unravelling from its fingers and toes.

Zinzi grabs the doll and hugs it tightly to her chest. She rushes back to Gogo, and thrusts it into her hands with dread. Gogo narrows her eyes, turning the doll over and over.

The other women have stopped their work and lean forward in concern. The three children stand rigid. Sam edges towards Zinzi and clutches the corner of her shirt.

GOGO

It's the Boondogle's work.
(turning to the women)
The foreign customer.

There is a shocked intake of breath from the beading circle. Gogo sits down slowly and places Leila's doll on the floor in the centre of the circle.

Gogo closes her eyes, rocks back and forth, holding her gourd.

Gogo finally shudders and opens her eyes.

GOGO (CONT'D)

Leila has been taken into the
Bead World.
(shakes head)
I should have known.

VUYO

The Bead World?

GOGO

My mother's mother told of a place where the magic of the beads has gathered - for over seventy millennia and more.

Zinzi stares at Leila's doll, gradually unravelling.

ZINZI

But why are the beads falling off?

GOGO

This doll was used to send Leila into the Bead World. By sunset this evening, every last bead will have come off and Leila will be trapped there forever.

SAM

Forever and ever?

Gogo takes Sam's hand.

GOGO

Unless she is rescued. But only children can go to the Bead World.

VUYO

Then we must go!

GOGO

It is a deeply dangerous place, filled with many temptations. They say there are those who are waylaid and never return.

Zinzi looks questioningly at Vuyo and Sam, who each nod.

ZINZI

Gogo, we're making this choice.

GOGO

Then we will all help.

Gogo turns to the other beading women, who put down their work and thread their needles for the new task.

On the clatter of Mrs Valentine's high heels, the children duck into the storeroom at the back.

The children watch as Mrs Valentine hangs up a sequined wedding gown and grabs handfuls of notes from her steel box.

MRS VALENTINE
 Wedding bells, ladies! And I've
 found just the shoes to match the
 outfit.

Not waiting for a response, she click-clacks out once more
 and the children come out of hiding.

Zinzi glances at a beaded clock - it's after two.

ZINZI
 We've wasted so much time when our
 answer was right here in the shop
 all along!

GOGO
 No time is ever wasted, Zinzi.

Zinzi stares at Gogo questioningly.

GOGO (CONT'D)
 But now we must act fast. As you
 say, it is late.

The women work together - singing softly. The children help
 by sorting the beads.

The two-headed dog watches from the counter, its mirror eyes
 flickering ever so slightly.

Leila's doll unravels steadily on the floor at their feet.

56 EXT. ROBBEN ISLAND - EARLY AFTERNOON 56

The Boondogle is racing up and down the beach where he left
 Zinzi. He draws in the net, and seeing the big hole Zinzi
 cut with her scissors, stamps his feet in fury.

57 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS - MID-AFTERNOON 57

Leila's doll has unravelled to leave only a torso and head.

The beaded clock shows a little before four.

The children stand in the middle of the circle of women,
 holding their respective effigies. Zinzi's doll has braids
 and carries a bead rucksack. Vuyo's skinny doll has glasses.
 Sam's is a compact little doll with a Superman cape.

GOGO
 You must remember, I can help you
 into the Bead World, but only you
 can find the way out.

The children listen carefully.

GOGO (CONT'D)

Just like Leila's doll, yours
will come undone by sunset. If
you don't get out of the Bead
World by then, you will remain
there forever. Are you sure you
are ready for this?

The children look at each other with grim determination and
nod.

GOGO (CONT'D)

Very well. Close your eyes tight...

The children close their eyes.

Slapping with their hands, the beading women beat out an
intricate rhythm on drums. One by one they add their
voices, creating the different layers of sound of a
mysterious song - full of promise and of danger.

GOGO (CONT'D)

(murmurs hypnotically)

Watch the colours moving behind
your eyelids...

Zinzi squeezes her eyes even more tightly and we see in her
mind's eye...

- ZINZI'S POV: Little coloured specks dance around, like
those that one sees when squeezing ones eyes against the
sunlight... Patterns of floating colour dance and sparkle -
slowly becoming rounder and more solid.

Gogo and the women clutch one another's hands in horror as
the three children convulse, before suddenly vanishing in a
rainbow explosion.

All that remains are the lifeless dolls lying expressionless
on the ground.

58 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS IN BEAD WORLD - CONTINUOUS 58

The bead dolls still lie on the ground in the shop. Around
them the sculptures, masks, figurines and wire creatures are
moving around and making a hullabaloo.

The two-headed dog is still at its lookout point by the till.

DOG HEAD ONE

What have we here?

DOG HEAD TWO

Here? Here we have creatures from
the Real World.

DOG HEAD ONE
World. Beaded through?

DOG HEAD TWO
Through. But we wonder, will they
get out?

DOG HEAD ONE
Out?

DOG HEADS ONE AND TWO
By sunset?

The children sit up. They stare around, entranced by the
myriad live creatures. They touch their own and one another's
beaded limbs and faces, giggling nervously.

The children scan the shop for Leila.

SAM
Leila! Leila!

Leila is nowhere to be seen. Zinzi looks hopelessly among the
row of bead dolls, who are playing hide 'n go seek on their
shelf.

The children push out through the bead curtain.

59 EXT. HARBOUR IN BEAD WORLD - LATE-AFTERNOON

59

The children run through the harbour, their feet crunching
and squeaking disconcertingly on the beads underfoot. They
are scarcely able to believe their eyes. The street is a copy
of the real world, except everything beaded - bright, glossy,
hard-edged. Colours are off-kilter: the sky turquoise, the
sun orange.

The children crisscross the harbour. Beaded waves rattle up
against the quay. Table Mountain is a hulking mass of beads.

The children have to dodge the bustling inhabitants, who
are all manner of beaded creatures - like those in the bead
shop.

Sam stops outside the toy shop that aroused Leila's
curiosity in the real world.

ZINZI
(sadly)
Perhaps. I never let her go
inside before.

The three children run inside.

60 INT. TOY SHOP IN BEAD WORLD - CONTINUOUS 60

The shop is jam packed with garish bead toys, their clashing colours blinding in the fluorescent light.

Sam runs over to a beady toy Superman. Zinzi tugs him away.

ZINZI
Don't touch, Sam!

SAM
Why not? It's super-cool!

ZINZI
Gogo said we must resist any temptations.

VUYO
Look!

Vuyo is pointing at the shelf labelled TEDDY BEARS, which is conspicuously empty.

VUYO (CONT'D)
The teddies are sold out...

Sam points urgently at a bead teddy lying on the floor near the opposite entrance.

The children look at each other, hardly daring to hope, and rush out the door.

61 EXT. OUTSIDE TOY SHOP IN BEAD WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON 61

The children stop outside the toy shop, and look all about. Vuyo spots another teddy lying some way off, and the children run after it.

Soon they are running down the street, guided every now and again by a teddy sprawled on the road. The boys race ahead of Zinzi, who stops to look down side roads and into shops, calling out.

ZINZI
Leila? Leila!

62 EXT. PARK IN BEAD WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON 62

Leila is pushing a doll's pram, stuffed full of beaded teddies, towards the swings, bead wheels squeaking on the lime green beaded grass. She is licking a bead ice cream, spitting out beads between licks - her face vacant, eyes faraway.

She takes the teddies from the pram and carefully arranges them into a swing's tyre seat, counting in a sing-song voice.

LEILA

One, two, fwee, nine, firty fwee.

She pushes the swing.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Wock-a-bye baby on the twee top
When the wind blows, the cwadle will wock

Leila's voice rises in glee as the swing reaches full motion.

LEILA (CONT'D)

When the bough bweaks, the cwadle will fall
Down will come baby, bough, cwadle and all.

63 EXT. HARBOUR IN REAL WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON

63

Back in the real world, the Boondogle lopes angrily through the harbour, cursing as he goes -

BOONDOGGLE

I've looked in the mountain, sky and sea,
Where in the world could those children be?
Vexation, torment, bother and blow,
Where on earth did those children go?

64 EXT. OUTSIDE PARK IN BEAD WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON

64

Sam and Vuyo rush up to the park entrance where a tinkling beaded ice cream van - with no driver - trundles to a stop. A dreamy tune floats out from the van.

They approach the van, eyes on stalks at the array of ice cream cones on display. They are topped with tall spirals of luminous ice cream and garish toppings. A colourful sign propped up reads: HELP YOURSELF.

The boys look at each other and, without a word, each grab a cone and start licking hungrily. They twirl their tongues around the spirals of colour and spit out beads between each lick - growing dreamier all the while, their faces becoming blank and forgetful.

Shafts of coloured light bounce off the jungle gym, swings and roundabout, luring the children into the park.

65 EXT. PARK IN BEAD WORLD - CONTINUOUS 65

Vuyo and Sam wander into the park, oblivious to one another. They don't even notice Leila, who - in a daze - is still pushing the swing.

66 EXT. OUTSIDE PARK IN BEAD WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON 66

Zinzi arrives at the park entrance. Hearing the ice cream van's alluring tune she goes over and chooses a cone.

She is just about to take a lick when she stops, concern furrowing her brow as she remembers. She flings the cone into a bead bin and flicks down the HELP YOURSELF sign.

She looks up, and sees the boys through the railings.

- ZINZI'S POV: Vuyo is doing one somersault after another on the top rung of the jungle gym, while Sam spins on the merry-go-round, his beaded cape behind him.

Zinzi shifts her gaze, and sees Leila at the swings.

Zinzi's face lights up and she runs into the park, laughing with delight, her arms outstretched.

67 EXT. PARK IN BEAD WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON 67

Zinzi runs up to Leila and flings her arms around her.

ZINZI

Leila! You're safe!

LEILA

Hello, Zinzi. Look at all my friends!

Zinzi swallows hard. She steps back, staring at Leila, who carries on pushing the swing.

ZINZI

We were so worried...

Leila ignores her, singing.

LEILA

When the bough bweaks, the cwadle will fall
Down will come baby, bough, cwadle and all.

Zinzi looks desperately around at the boys.

ZINZI

Vuyo! Sam! Come! There's
something wrong with Leila...

But the boys ignore Zinzi, utterly preoccupied.

68 INT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS IN REAL WORLD - LATE AFTERNOON 68

Mrs Valentine and the beading ladies head out through the
bead curtain. The bead clock reads 5:30 p.m.

Only Gogo is left. She stares anxiously at the beads
falling steadily off all four children's dolls. They have
unravelling so that only the heads and shoulders remain
intact. Gogo sadly gathers the loose beads into a pile and
threads a needle.

As the Boondogle enters the shop, Gogo whips the dolls
beneath her skirt. But the Boondogle has already seen them.

BOONDOGLE

You thought that you were rather smart,
With your ancient magic art.
So then the game is not yet done?
That's fine by me, I'll have more fun!

The Boondogle hisses in Gogo's ear.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

The sun is low, they won't get out,
I'll have four slaves, without a doubt.

Gogo swings round, but only wisps of light remain where the
Boondogle vanished...

69 EXT. VALENTINE'S BEAD CURIOS IN BEAD WORLD - CONTINUOUS 69

... before reappearing with a flash in the Bead World version
of the shop. The Boondogle is, like the children, made of
beads.

The Boondogle scours the thronging sculptures and masks.
Increasingly vexed, he bulldozes his way out - beaded
creatures scuttling out of his way in a pandemonium of
shrieks.

The two-headed Dog chortles -

DOG HEAD ONE

Methinks he's on their trail.

DOG HEAD TWO

Trail. But the children have an
early start.

DOG HEAD ONE

Start. But have they gone astray?

DOG HEAD TWO

Stray? Our world is full of
delights and snares.

DOG HEAD ONE

Snares. They all stray.

BOTH HEADS

They stray and then they stay.

70

EXT. PARK IN BEAD WORLD - JUST BEFORE SUNSET

70

The sun, now a round red disk, is moving towards the horizon.

The Boondogle sneaks into the park and over to the sandpit, gleefully viewing, as he passes, the children in their separate activities...

Sam is still spinning on the merry-go-round. Vuyo keeps doing somersaults on the top rung of the jungle gym.

Zinzi is trying to tug Leila away from the swings, but Leila clings onto the chains.

LEILA

No! Leave me! I want to play!

The Boondogle laughs softly in delight. He reaches the sandpit, wriggling himself down amongst the loose beads until - like a crocodile - only his eyes poke out. His gaze is fixed on the children.

Zinzi runs over to the jungle gym where she climbs up and catches Vuyo mid-somersault.

ZINZI

Vuyo. We must take Leila home.
For Mama.

VUYO

Mama...

Ever-so-slowly, as if coming round to consciousness, Vuyo climbs down.

Vuyo follows Zinzi over to Sam. Zinzi drags the merry-go-round to a standstill.

ZINZI

Sam. We must take Leila home. For
Mama.

SAM

Mama...

Sam staggers off the merry-go-round. He and Vuyo follow Zinzi over to the swings, where all three surround Leila.

ZINZI

Leila. We need to take you home.
For Mama.

Leila angrily screws up her face and knocks the beaded teddies out of the swing.

LEILA

Mama's not at home. She's gone to
Daddy.

Zinzi looks at the sun, rapidly reaching the horizon. She bites her lip and kneels down next to Leila.

ZINZI

About Mama...

LEILA

She's never coming home, is she?

Zinzi draws Leila to her.

ZINZI

No, Leila, she can't. Mama died.
But she will always live in our
hearts.

LEILA

I know.

ZINZI

And she wanted our family to stay
together.

Zinzi stands up, leading Leila gently by the hand.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Come, Leila, we're going home.

The sun's lower edge touches the horizon.

The Boondogle rises up triumphant - flicking the sandpit beads off with his tail and cackling with delight. The children startle and stare in terror as he struts over.

BOONDOGLE

And how do you suppose you'll go?
You're not human now, you know.
Stiff and lifeless little toys -
Two beaded girls, two beaded boys!

The children touch their bead bodies with dawning realisation.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

You think that you are very clever -
Yet you'll stay with me forever!

He stretches his wings to cast a shadow over them.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

You have no blood, no bones, no breath.
It seems like life, it's more like death...

The children gape at the Boondogle as his meaning sinks in.
But Zinzi has a sudden burst of inspiration -

ZINZI

Our gifts!

VUYO

Yes! This must be when we 'need
them most'!

Zinzi opens her rucksack and pulls out the periwinkle,
which is still in its real world form. She turns to the
children, holding the periwinkle aloft.

ZINZI

We do have blood - the Lifeblood of
the Ocean!

Vuyo glances in terror at the looming Boondogle, and
whispers urgently.

VUYO

Try to rhyme, Zinzi, just like he
does...

Zinzi frowns, thinking quickly.

ZINZI

Joyous life blood... of the ocean...
Won't you... set our veins... in motion!

She passes the periwinkle around and each child takes a sip.
Leila wrinkles her nose at the salty water. The Boondogle
lunges for the shell - but Zinzi throws the last seawater in
his eyes. He staggers, temporarily blinded, barking in fury.

Vuyo takes the feather from his pocket, turning it over.

VUYO

And we do have breath - the Breath
of the Sky!

Zinzi looks around, seeking inspiration. The sun is now a
semi-circle behind the horizon.

ZINZI

Living breath... of open sky,
Let us to... our freedom fly!

Vuyo lets the feather go free, and it floats up on a magical eddy of air and spirals around the children.

His sight restored, the Boondogle leaps up to catch the feather, but it floats just out of reach. He howls in fury -

BOONDOGLE

This is appalling, quite atrocious -
Drat! These kids are too precocious!

Sam takes the fossil from his pocket.

SAM

And we've got bone - the Strength
of the Earth!

The Boondogle makes a run to grab the fossil. In the nick of time Sam ducks between the jungle gym bars and the children scramble behind. The Boondogle, twice Zinzi's size, can't squeeze through the bars, which he shakes in fury.

Sam places his fossil on top of the periwinkle in Zinzi's palm. The feather spirals down on an eddy of air. The Boondogle lunges for the feather, but it slips between his talons and floats down between the jungle gym's top bars, to land on the bone and the periwinkle in Zinzi's hand.

Together, all three objects take on a soft glow.

The Boondogle thrusts his arm through the bars, but can't quite reach. He clambers up the jungle gym.

Vuyo, Sam, and finally Leila pile their hands on top of the gifts in Zinzi's outstretched palm.

The Boondogle begins to squeeze through the gap at the top of the jungle gym.

ZINZI

Oh powerful and ancient bone...

The Boondogle plummets towards the children...

ZINZI (CONT'D)

Give us strength... to reach our home!

And they are gone - just as the last sliver of sun slips behind the bead mountain.

71 EXT. PARK IN REAL WORLD - DUSK

71

The children re-appear with a flash, back in the middle of the real world jungle gym. Their hands are still laid on the gifts, whose glow is fading.

The children laugh with relief to find that they have their own bodies back and clamber out onto the grass.

LEILA

I want to go home.

But on the word 'home' the Boondogle appears in a flash in the middle of the jungle gym. He squeezes out through the gap at the top, where he towers over the devastated children.

BOONDOGLE

Home? I would not be so sure,
You're very small and rather poor.
Mrs V will have her way -
She'll throw you from your home today!

SAM

She can't! A deal's a deal!

VUYO

We have the ten thousand badges.

The children nod vehemently, but the Boondogle shakes his head with a nasty grin.

BOONDOGLE

Your precious badges will disperse
When I make magic in reverse.

He gallops off in the direction of the children's home - his tail lashing from side to side. The children race after him.

72 INT. ZINZI'S HOME - DUSK

72

Looming over the badges, the Boondogle chants backwards - savouring each word as he dances in slow motion...

BOONDOGLE

Snoita-lloc raluc-itrap eerht ekam...

Zinzi, Vuyo and Sam watch in horror as a couple of beads break away from the badges.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

'Snoita-erc raluc-ibro ruo ekat...

Leila finds Teddy - facedown on the floor where she dropped him that morning. She kisses him all over, stopping at his armpit.

Her smile turns into a frown: under Teddy's arm is the badge that she used in lieu of a plaster - with its Boondogle icon.

Leila tugs madly at Zinzi's skirt to get her attention away from the Boondogle's chant.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Snoita-t-nac raluc-irua eseht raeh...

Zinzi gasps and stares at the badge in recognition of the little Boondogle figure. She unpins it quickly.

BOONDOGLE (CONT'D)

Snoita-rtsul raluc-irtnev-

Zinzi interrupts loudly, waving the badge before the Boondogle.

ZINZI

With my tears, see what I made!
When mama died, I was afraid...

The Boondogle stares down at Zinzi, who looks straight back up at him and declares:

ZINZI (CONT'D)

But now I've opened up my eyes
And seen in you my fears disguised.

The Boondogle suddenly shrinks down to Zinzi's height, and looks down appalled at his reduced frame. Zinzi smiles.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

All of us have grown much stronger:
Our hearts are ruled by fear no longer!

The Boondogle shrinks down to Leila's height, tail thrashing in distress.

Zinzi tries to pull the badge apart, but the threads remain firm. The little Boondogle rears up, snarling and baring his teeth, and trying to snatch the badge from Zinzi.

Zinzi throws the badge to Vuyo, who catches it. The Boondogle charges towards Vuyo, who throws it to Sam. Sam throws the badge to Leila, who races back to Zinzi.

The Boondogle shrinks back to his original badge size - Zinzi's mother's necklace falling in a circle around his feet.

Zinzi snatches it up and knots it back around her neck.

She puts out her hand, and Leila places the Boondogle badge in her palm. Zinzi looks directly at the Boondogle.

ZINZI (CONT'D)

So long my fear, farewell fierce foe;
Now it's time for you to go.

Zinzi pulls at the badge with all her might, finally ripping it to shreds.

With a bloodcurdling screech, the Boondogle vanishes in an explosion of coloured light.

Mrs Valentine arrives at the front door just in time to see the children break into whoops - leaping wildly on the bed.

MRS VALENTINE

S-stop! You'll break my bedsprings!

The children stand on the bed, staring unfazed at Mrs Valentine.

ZINZI

The room is ours!

Zinzi gestures triumphantly at the mountains of badges and, to the others' delight, jumps twice more for emphasis.

Feeling dizzy, Mrs Valentine collapses onto a heap of badges - legs splayed out in front of her.

SAM

A promise is a promise!

MRS VALENTINE

Well... er...

Vuyo bounces off the bed and yanks the written contract from the wall. He reads aloud.

VUYO

I will give Zinzi the room if she
makes 10,000 badges by Monday 19th
January.

Leila squats to count badge by badge.

LEILA

One, two, fwee, seven, firty, one
hun-dwed, ten fou-sand!

MRS VALENTINE

Um...but you see...

ZINZI

Lost for words, Mrs V?
(winks at Vuyo)
We know just what to say!

Zinzi and Vuyo flap their arms and shake their bottoms. Soon Sam and Leila join in and altogether they chant the Boondogle's spell.

ALL KIDS

Fear my ventricular lustrations
Hear these auricular cantations
Take our orbicular creations
Make three particular collations!

Mrs Valentine's mouth gapes open so wide that the children can see her gold fillings. Vuyo writes swiftly onto the end of the contract, as he speaks out loud.

VUYO

Received: 10,000 badges, in good order.

Vuyo hands the agreement and a pen to Mrs Valentine.

VUYO (CONT'D)

Your signature, Ma'am.

Mrs Valentine signs shakily before stuffing badges into her handbag and scuttling out the front door.

The children pass the agreement around, grinning proudly. Vuyo sticks it over Mrs Valentine's calendar. He scoops Leila up and canters around, jumping heaps of badges - Leila squeaking with joy.

Zinzi beams at Sam, and tosses a bucket playfully at him. He heads it back and she catches it.

Zinzi shovels fistfuls of badges into the bucket and a laundry basket.

73

EXT. HARTLEY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

73

Sam and Leila form a cheerful relay chain, passing the loads to Vuyo who empties the badges into the van, festooned with hearts and labelled: MRS VALENTINE'S VAN.

As Zinzi carries the last bucket of badges outside, her two girlfriends walk past on the other side of the road. They call out to her tentatively.

GIRL 1

Hello, Zinzi!

Zinzi crosses the road and hugs each of them.

ZINZI

See you at school tomorrow, guys!
It's going to be a great year!

The girls grin happily.

GIRL 2
We'll come by to fetch you on the way.

They walk on down the road. Smiling to herself, Zinzi joins the others loading the van.

Mr Solomon approaches, carrying a suitcase.

MR SOLOMON
Evening, kids!

Leila runs up to him.

LEILA
Do you know what? We were in a place all made of beads!

Mr Solomon smiles indulgently.

LEILA (CONT'D)
I ate ice cream made of beads!
Yuck! And the teddies were made of beads, and the gwass and the see-saw ...

Mr Solomon smiles at Zinzi who comes over with the boys.

MR SOLOMON
And I suppose your sister was made of beads, too?

ZINZI
(smiles back)
We heard there was an emergency?

Mr Solomon shakes his head, mystified.

MR SOLOMON
It's the strangest thing. A doctor Piet de Siet called to say my sister was desperately ill. But I got to Joburg to find her as well as could be.

Zinzi raises a suspicious eyebrow at Vuyo.

VUYO
Sounds like someone got their stethoscopes crossed.

Mrs Valentine honks and Zinzi and Leila take the last bucket of badges over to the van. Mr Solomon turns to Sam -

MR SOLOMON

You kids come by every day after school. I'll make sure there's always something warm to eat at Solomon's Corner Store.

SAM

We'll be there! Thanks, Mr Solomon.

Mr Solomon turns to Vuyo.

MR SOLOMON

And if any of you can spare some time from your schoolwork, there are plenty of odd jobs around the shop. I know you'll be needing cash.

Vuyo and Sam throw their arms around Mr Solomon. Smiling warmly, he picks up his suitcase, and carries on his way.

Mrs Valentine slams the back door of her van. She surveys the four children - her hands on her hips.

MRS VALENTINE

You lot are really something else.

Zinzi's eyes widen in surprise.

ZINZI

Gee, thanks Mrs V.

Mrs Valentine climbs into her van and rolls down the window.

MRS VALENTINE

Who knows? If you kids behave, I might even invite you to my wedding. My fiance is quite out of this world!

Mrs Valentine roars off into the night - her van backfiring. The children roar with laughter, blowing raspberries in imitation.

The children's laughter quickly dies when they hear the sound of sorrowful singing in the distance. They turn and watch a far-off figure coming up the hill, carrying a basket.

Leila rushes to Gogo, burying her face in her skirt. Gogo bursts into tears of relief, holding Leila tight.

GOGO

You're home. Home for good.

Gogo pulls the children into a firm embrace.

GOGO (CONT'D)

Today you have faced your fears.
Your Mama would be so proud of you.
I know I am.

ZINZI

But, we'd never have done it
without you.

VUYO

Or the beading ladies.

SAM

Or the animals and their gifts.

LEILA

Or Teddy!

GOGO

Nobody manages alone. We all need
one another to make a good life.

She takes a beaded skirt out of her bag.

GOGO (CONT'D)

I made this for you, Zinzi, from
the beads of your magic dolls, when
things looked very bad for you all.
I made it in hope. It threads
together your whole family.

She holds up her arm, stripped of its bangles.

GOGO (CONT'D)

I added in some of my own, because
we are all family now.

VUYO

Look, Zinzi, the colours match
Mama's necklace.

He points to the string of beads around Zinzi's neck.

Zinzi puts on the skirt and whirls round, the beads blurring
in a wash of colour. Sam whistles and the others cheer. Zinzi
curtseys gracefully.

ZINZI

It's beautiful, Gogo!

GOGO

And you are beautiful, Zinzi. You
have truly become a young woman
today.

Zinzi beams with delight.

Gogo leans down to Leila and whispers in her ear.

GOGO (CONT'D)
I'll come by after work to hear
all your stories from playschool.

Leila gives Gogo a loud kiss on the cheek, before going on her way, her voice rising in a song of celebration.

VUYO
We did it!

Vuyo breaks into a dance of victory. He shakes his bottom and flaps his arms all the way inside. Shrieking with laughter, Sam and Leila wriggle their way after him.

Zinzi stands gazing over the row of rooftops stretching down the street to the harbour lights.

She closes her eyes and feels with her hand for her heartbeat.

MOTHER'S WHISPER
Can you feel it?

Gasping, Zinzi opens her eyes.

ZINZI
I can.

Zinzi laughs joyously and shouts up into the star-lit sky.

ZINZI (CONT'D)
I can feel it!

Zinzi stands quietly in the doorway, gazing at the mountain gleaming under the moon.

From inside their home, come the laughing voices of Vuyo, Sam and Leila. Zinzi goes inside, closing the door behind her.

74 EXT. ABOVE CITY - NIGHT

74

We move from the children's home - the windows of which glow slightly brighter than any house in the street. We pass swiftly over the waterfront...

We soar out over the harbour glistening in the moonlight to Robben Island, where the dolphins leap and dive.

We glide up the mountainside, where the baboon troop is settling down for the night.

And up into the sky, where the mother eagle does a triumphant circle before settling next to the father eagle - on their nest on the highest crag.

75 CREDIT SEQUENCE

75

The credits roll over a jaunty cabaret style rendition of the Boondogle dance - played by the carnival troupe from the New Year's celebrations. Zinzi, Vuyo, Sam and Leila start off, wiggling bums, giving high fives...

Mrs Valentine stands in an elaborate wedding gown, putting the finishing touches to her make-up.

Enter the dolphins, baboons and eagles, the last with two cute but ungainly eaglet chicks in tow, whom Vuyo admires. The baby baboon runs to Sam and jumps in his arms. Zinzi strokes her dolphin friends. They all fall into the dance.

Mrs Valentine checks her watch nervously.

Enter Gogo and the beading women.

Mrs Valentine impatiently taps her foot and scrabbles in her bag for her cell phone.

Enter Mr Solomon and Zinzi's girlfriends.

Mrs Valentine listens to her phone, which declares in a tinny voice: 'The subscriber you have dialed is not available on this network'. Mrs Valentine hurls the phone across the screen in disgust.

Enter the tourists, the tour leader, the two-headed dog and the bead creatures. The children dance gaily in and around them all.

Mrs Valentine rips her gown down the front and steps out in a clingy petticoat - loosens her hair and runs to join the dance.

Now enters the Boondogle, in a sequinned Elvis suit and wig. With a nod to the carnival troupe, he grabs a microphone and sings a dance number.

All the characters pair up, until just the Boondogle and Mrs Valentine are left. The Boondogle grabs her and they do a few spins together.

On spotting his dolphin tail, the children rip off the Boondogle's wig and pull down his Elvis pants to expose his dolphin tail. Mrs Valentine, horrified, chases him off, kicking his bum.

The children pull Mrs Valentine back into the curtain call. At the last moment the Boondogle - stripped of his suit - runs to join Zinzi at stage centre, and the entire cast take a bow.